
SKETCH MAP
OF
CONNEMARA
CAHER ISLAND
SIGNAL TOWER
INISHTURK
CARRANTY
PORTDOON
CARRICKOOLA
INISHDALLA
CROSS POINT
ROONAH LOUGH
CARROWNISKY R.
BUNOWEN R.
ONGAMORE R.
L. NAHALTORA
CREGGANBAUN
KINNADOOHY
GLENREEN BRIDGE
LUCACOLLIWEE L.
L. CUNNEL
GLENCULLIN LOUGH
TIEVUMMERA 2304
CLASHCAME 2474
BENBURB 2160
LOUGH DOO
MWEELREA 2688
TAWNYARD L.
DELPHI
BALD BRIDGE
BENGORM 2303
AASLEAGH
ERRIFF R.
CHURCH
KILLARY HARBOUR
BUNODRAGHA
PIPE CEMETERY
DERRYNACLOUGH
LEENANE
DEVILSMOTHER 2131
BUNOWEN R.
JOYCE'S RIVER
MAUMTURK MOUNTAINS
BERLANABARCK R.
KNOCKPASHEEMORE 1362
THE TWELVE PINS
OR
BENNA BEOLA
BENGORABEG 1908
LOUGH INAGH
L. LEHANAGH
BENBREEN 2276
DERRYCLARE 2220
BENLETTERY 1904
DERRYCLARE LOUGH
OWENTOCKEN R.
RECESS HOTEL
RECESS STATION
GLENDOLLAGH HOUSE
BALLYNAHINCH STATION
LOUGH FADDA
MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN RY
OWENGLIN RIVER
L. ANNA
L. NAHILLION
L. NAGUROUGE
STREAMSTOWN
DERRYGEE
SCHOOL
CLIFDEN
CLIFDEN BAY
L. MARIA
ARDAGH
MANNIN BAY
FALSE BAY
TRUSRA L.
TURBOT IS.
OMEY IS.
CRUAGH IS.
HIGH ISLAND
TURA IS.
DOG IS.
CLEGGAN BAY
CLEGGAN
CLEGGAN HOUSE
BALLYNAKILL
BALLYNAKILL HARBOUR
FERALLAGH
MOYARD
DIAMOND HILL 1680
LETTERFRACK
KYLEMORE CASTLE
KYLEMORE LOUGH
SHANAVEAG
L. ACREAGH
LOWER LEE
L. MUCK
LOWLAUN
TULLY
TULLY L.
TULLY CROSS
LETTER BEG
KENVYLE PT.
KENVYLE HOUSE
CRUMP ISLAND
INISHBARNA
INISHDEGIL MORE
MAYO SANDS
FAHILL IS.
DAVILLAUN G.
INISHBOFIN
BOFIN HARBOUR
INISHLYON IS.
INISHGORT
STAGS OF BOFIN
PIGEON COVE
INISHARK
ARDLEA COVE
FAWNA
GARRANBAUN PT.



View of the Little Killary, as seen from the door of Salruck Church, Connemara (p. 32).

CONNEMARA

AND THE

NEIGHBOURING SPOTS OF BEAUTY AND INTEREST:

Being Notes on

ACHILL ISLAND—CASHEL—CLEGGAN—
CLIFDEN—CLONBUR—CONG—CORCOMROE ABBEY—
DELPHI—DOON—GALWAY—INNISCRONE—KILFENORA—
KILLARIES — KILLE — KYLEMORE — LENANE — LETTERFRACK —
LISDOONVARNA—MAAM—NEWPORT—NEW QUAY (CO.
CLARE)—RECESS—RENVYLE—SALRUCK—
SLIGO—WESTPORT—ETC.

WITH REMARKS ON

SEA AND FRESH WATER FISHING, IRISH CHARACTER, ARCHÆOLOGY, BOTANY, ETC.

BY J. HARRIS STONE, M.A.

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
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PREFACE.

In these pages I have simply endeavoured, however inadequately, to describe, by means of pen and lens, the West of Ireland as I myself see it.

I like exceedingly the country I write about, and also its inhabitants, and if, by this book, I can persuade others to make the acquaintance of both, my purpose is served.

The West of Ireland, as I experienced myself at first, is rather a puzzling part of Ireland to find one's way about in, so I have introduced one or two sketch maps, which, if consulted, will, I think, make the way plain. For the drawing of these, under my instructions, I desire to thank Mr. H. Wellbeloved.

As I have, during the last few years, contributed numerous articles—touching more or less upon several of the places and topics mentioned in these pages—to many journals in London and the provinces, should any reader fancy he or she has a dim recollection of having read something like any of the passages before, the surmise is probably correct.

I have added what is intended to serve as a fairly complete index, so that readers taking the book with them may, I trust, find it useful on their travels for quick reference.

The book is divided into Four Parts: Part I., Connemara; Part II., County Clare; Part III., County Sligo; Part IV., Achill Island.

J. H. S.

July, 1906.

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PART I.

CONNEMARA.

CHAPTER I.

THE KILLARIES—THE GREAT KILLARY—FUCHSIAS—INSECTIVOROUS PLANTS—MWEELREA—CANOES.

THE Poet Laureate some years ago wrote, when indulging in prose: "Let the picturesque-hunting artist go to Ireland, and he will find endless variety of form and attitude in the lofty and irregular hills. If he be in search of colour he ought to make Ireland his home. It is as though all the rainbow hues of Nature, that fail to find in the uniform sea and sky of the wide Atlantic a fitting and sufficiently sensitive canvas, discharged their iridescent loveliness on the mountain brows of Connemara." After discounting the usual poetic exuberance of expression, there remains a solid substratum of truth in what Mr. Alfred Austin says.

Perhaps the late Dean Hole—famous for roses and wit—crystallized the same thought in neater shape when

he wrote that the beauties of Connemara are indescribable. Indeed they are. No truer summing up of the scenery, colouring, capricious climate, and interesting inhabitants could be given. For instance, the weather is emotional—very. Tears and laughter, sadness and merriment in quick succession. We have known in one short day in the Killaries hailstorms, torrential rains, soft, misty drizzle, and dazzling sunshine alternating with each other with marvellous thoroughness and rapidity.

To some people this very changeableness is the greatest charm. Certainly Connemara woos you as a coquettish maiden. The rain pours down and you feel despondent at its persistence, and lo! in a moment, when things seem at their worst, all is changed, and the warm sunshine tempts you out of your shelter, your damp clothes dry as if by magic, and the past is forgotten in the brilliant joyfulness of all Nature around you. No wonder the love of Connemara grows upon you, and the visitor of one year becomes the guide for others another year.

Associated with the fickleness of the weather is the marvellous variety in colouring on mountain and lake—peculiarly fascinating, if not absolutely unique, in the afternoons when the sun rays impinge on hill and water at an acute angle. Greens, yellows, the loveliest of orange, blues and purples in every possible and, one would have said, impossible gradation of shade and gorgeous or delicate intensity—and never two minutes the same.

The air is mild and balmy, never really cold, and the winters are such only in name; indeed, the fresh-

ness of shrub, tree, grass, and flower all the year round is so remarkable that spring may be said never to be entirely absent from this favoured region.

Not quite so bracing as Achill Island, the climate is well suited to all except the rheumatically disposed. A most desirable part of the country is Connemara for consumptives, as they could live here in the open air all the year round without discomfort, and, like the fuchsias, have a vigorous, healthy existence.

The most obvious indication of what the climate is may be gathered from the fuchsias. They are about the best test. They like a fairly humid atmosphere, plenty of sunshine, and are at daggers drawn with continued frost. If, therefore, they grow in the open air all the year round it may fairly be surmised that the climate is mild. Connemara is the place to see fuchsias in perfection, for they grow, or rather luxuriate, there in grand, freely flowering, gorgeous masses of bloom. They run wild in lovely unrestrained riot. Not solitary plants in pots, or carefully tended and kept free from weeds in cultivated gardens, taken in in the winter and coddled up in greenhouses. Grand, freely flowering masses of bloom—six, ten, and even more feet in height. Bushes of them as large as fair-sized elder trees. Hedges of them—as in the Kylemore Pass—literally miles long in two converging lines of startling bright red, to drive between which is an experience alone worth a pilgrimage to Connemara. Common or garden boundaries marked out by trees laden with the four-petalled crimson crosses, enclosing the inner whorl of regal purple, which in turn keep guard over the foundations of the eight turkey-red stamens, and

the long spur, shooting out, pistil. In every crevice in the walls, in every ditch. In short, fuchsias as only Connemara can grow them.

But fuchsias not alone gladden the earth of this spot so favoured by Nature. Other wild flowers in their due season are to be found in abundance to keep them company; some most rare, almost bordering upon the exotic. The fern along the wayside and in the ditches most common being the king of all ferns, the *Osmunda regalis*, with polypodies and several species of maiden-hair as associates to tone down the exuberance of imperial greatness. Heathers—the ordinary purple, the small bell heather, and the large Cape (which is to be found on the northern, less visited, shores of the Great Killary)—grow in profusion and lining the slopes of the mountains to the water's edge, both fresh and salt, mixed with tall bracken, afford appropriate purple and green setting for the small white specks on the landscape representing the hardy Connemara sheep.

The grass here, as elsewhere in Ireland, is green—verdant green. There is no grass in the world like Irish grass. The tropics have their delights, but they have no turf. Even the original Garden of Eden could not possibly have had such turf as you see all over Ireland. And what value has a garden without grass? Such is Connemara in the summer.

And then what a grand place to study the insectivorous plants in! The sun-dew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) growing all over the mountains and even down to the sea level, where it may be found in the same heathery moist clumps with its companion in insect slaughter, the butter-


SLIGO
Arras Dondenell
O Dondy
COUNT
Clanquissulo
Tin
lough
Magussulo
Garogh
Ferrance
Skull Island
Black rock
M Tibot
M William
Burck
O M Philpin
Utragh
Carew M Ville Uterhday
M Iordan Baron of Exeter
Lough
Forrest of Kellelan
O Male
MAIO
Meiks
Barony Dromor
COUN
Earl of Clanricket
Montaghu M Reagh
Barony of
M Thomas
O Donolans
Gnowaré
O Flart
Barony of Kinge
Galway
Killenero
Kenally
O Shaghn
COUNTY
Kilmacullo
Kilmacullo
Kilmacullo

wort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*). Along the lovely switchback-like road, for instance, by the fiord of the Lesser Killary, between Salruck and Rosroe, the pale green leaves of the latter, with their incurved margins and their treacherous sticky concavities boldly flouting, and setting their fatal traps in the face of the sun, are to be found in considerable numbers. The light yellowish green of the rosette-arranged leaves attract more attention than do the dull purple, uncanny, tiny octopus tentacles of the sun-dew. Yet both, with their respective weapons and arrangements, are engaged in a tremendous struggle for existence, fighting over which can capture the most flies which blow in from the sea or are wafted across the trout lakes and streams.

The western coast of Ireland is much fretted, as if bitten into by acid. The name Connemara itself is indicative of its sea-line—the bays of the sea. These Norwegian-fiord examples of the intrusions of the Atlantic Ocean into the land are most confusing, and the casual tourist may be excused calling occasionally fiords lakes, and lakes sea ; for when the tide is full and close up to the green of the emerald shores in some apparently land-locked expanse of water, it were impossible to tell the scene was a sea- and not a land-scape. And when a drive of some twenty miles or more, entirely inland, amongst mountain passes and sheets of water suddenly reveals one of these puzzling phenomena, the rule of tasting the water before venturing an opinion may be excused to the Cockney caring nothing for, or knowing nothing of, geography.

The longest and most characteristically Norwegian



Looking down to Salruck from the top of the Hill, Mweelrea in the distance.

fiord is the Great Killary. This is unquestionably the feature of Connemara, and there is nothing like it in the United Kingdom. Running eleven miles, more or less east, from the Atlantic, this sea-attenuation irresistibly recalls the Sogne and Hardanger Fiords, for it combines, during its length, two extremes of scenery—grand, solitary savageness, and minute verdant beauty. The width varies from half a mile to a mile or more, and the mountains on either side run nearly up to the finger-tip at Aasleagh, and are mostly precipitous to the water's edge, particularly on the northern side. Still, here and there they fall off, and disclose wild glens and torrent-scored, barranco-looking ravines. Such are the Pass of Salruck on the south and Bundorrha on the north, while in striking contrast at Dernasliggaun trees, grass, and ferns in semi-tropical magnificence soothingly nestle right down to the water.

Mweelrea, a precipitous mountain near the entrance to the Killary on the north, opposite exquisitely situated Rosroe Cottage, rises straightway from the water's edge. It is 2,688 feet in height, and from the summit a grand panoramic view is obtainable on a clear day of the west coast for many miles round, of the fiord's guardian islands, and the almost innumerable inland lakes. In the picture of the Salruck road, mighty Mweelrea (pronounced *Mool-ray*) is seen in the background towering over the smaller mountains dividing the Little from the Great Killary.

A more deceptive, old, wrinkled, and deeply-seamed mountain it were difficult to find. Bald King is its name in English, and bald it certainly is in reality, for no trees

grow over its wizened surface. Probably, centuries ago, its nakedness, in contrast to the arboreal clothing of the lower land all around, accounts for the mountain's singular name. Still, the marvellous yellows, orange, green, and purple shades of colour which everlastingly play with chameleon-like character over its surface make Mweelrea, at all times of the day and under all circumstances of weather, attractive.

We have heard travellers, of some globe-trotting experience, on a casual view from the southern shore of the Killary, estimate the height at a thousand feet, with say 250 feet to the shoulder; others have placed it at 1500 feet. The truth is the air is so translucent that the summit when visible (which is not often, mist generally hanging in clinging masses or in delightful, fleecy, horizontal layers over the upper part) seems much nearer than it really is. Rising, as the mountain does, sheer and straight up from the water's edge, there is nothing of a known height beside it from which to gauge Mweelrea's stature. Similarly deceptive is the Peak of Tenerife, whose gigantic height when seen from the sea is absolutely unthinkable. The proof of the pudding is in the eating: the height of a mountain is in the climbing; and the quickest climber the writer has ever heard of who ascended Mweelrea took just one hour and three-quarters from the nearest Killary shore, opposite Rosroe, to summit. The average-legged person takes three hours.

A creeping, sinuous, silent tide is the Killary in fair weather; when the wind blows in with Atlantic violence from the west a choppy sea of dangerous, treacherous, unpleasantness. The Killary, in fact, is not safe for



The ordinary Irish Curragh. Just lifted, preparatory to walking it down to the sea



The ordinary Irish Canoe or Curragh. Ready to be walked down to the sea.

sailing boats eastward of Rosroe, the sides being too precipitous, and consequently squalls of considerable violence are frequent and top-heavy. Sailing is only advisable westward of that point, where sea-room begins to be obtainable.

The safest boat for such a changeable-weather spot is that now mostly used—the canoe or curragh. These are extremely light, constructed of thin deal planking with well-tarred canvas outside. They float like corks, riding on top of the waves, over which they skim with wonderful speed, and, if the paddles are kept out, are extremely stable. Of course they are not craft to stand up in, or play the fool in, but for these short, choppy, wind-swept seas, coast-work among the islands, and squall-liable inland lakes, are unsurpassed. The ancient Irish had apparently evolved the most perfectly adapted boat for local requirements, the canoe now in use being obviously the direct descendant of the old skin-covered curragh. They are made of light deal laths, between a quarter and three-eighths of an inch thick, covered with canvas stretched and well-tarred on the outside. As wind is very prevalent all along the west coast of Ireland, these canoes have to be kept on the shore, where they are turned upside down, and have large flat stones placed around the outside of the gunwale to prevent them being blown bodily into the sea.

A comic sight it is to see these black whale-like monsters walking down to the sea. The men get underneath, and, supporting the weight on their shoulders, leave only their trousered legs visible. Perhaps a gigantic black-beetle on four short legs is more nearly portrayed. The

ordinary-sized curragh can be carried by two men, though there are small ones which a man can carry on his back unaided. The largest I ever saw was made for four rowers and belonged to the Achill Islanders. When carrying a canoe, as the bearers' heads and shoulders are completely hidden, unless the way is well known a man has to remain outside and guide his comrades' footsteps with his voice.



A Single-handed Canoe or Curragh. (Scene on the Great Killary.)

These canoes are such light, corky crafts that any mast and sail is impossible. Still, in a light wind, when sailing before it, a workable makeshift is universally adopted—still even that is risky. The paddler takes off his coat, thrusts the blade of a paddle into each arm-hole, and

hoists up the coat on the paddles' extremities. The handle-ends of the paddles he crosses and holds between his knees, so that at any moment he can "lower sail" by pushing the two paddles together. The arrangement is undoubtedly labour-saving, but dangerous. If a sudden gust came down the mountains over would go the canoe, and then it would be, as it often has been, a bad look-out for the occupants. The waters in these parts are not thickly populated! Help seldom comes.

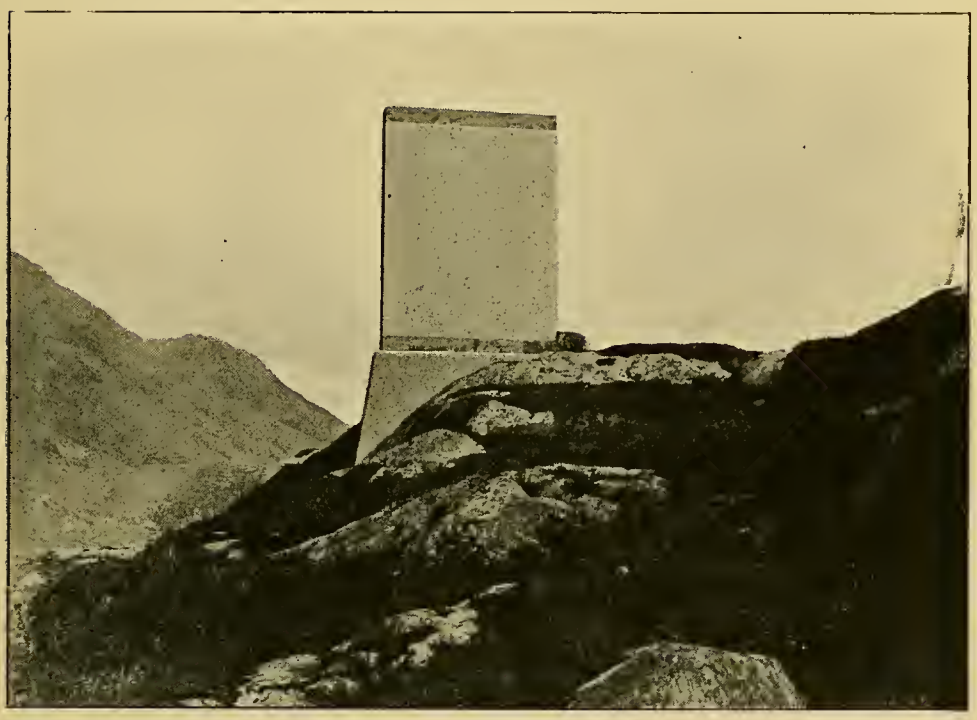
CHAPTER II.

The Great Killary—Inishbarna—Birds—Arboreal Clothing.

The water of the Great Killary, in keeping with its fiord-like character, is deep—more than twenty-five fathoms at high-water in its centre right up to the finger-tip at Aasleagh. So it affords a splendid anchorage when the difficulty of entering the mouth through the guardian islands has been negotiated. To facilitate this, a few years ago on two of the islands—the larger named Inishbarna—were placed marks, consisting of solid walls, twenty feet high, like the butts of rifle ranges, but faced on the westward with white tiled bricks. These marks are on the summits of the islands, and when got into line indicate the deep water-way into the Killary a little to their north. Before they were placed there the approach must have been a hazardous exploit, as the sea is strewn all about with small rocky islets and half-sunken rocks.

A visit to Inishbarna is well worth making. The island is uninhabited, though the ruins of a cabin shew that once it had inhabitants. At present only a few sheep graze there, but the large number of sheep bones and horns of sheep tell a tale of past sheep disasters. The view from the summit, near the curious square piece

of wall marking the entrance to the Great Killary, is comprehensive and instructive. Looking eastward—back to the main land—the entrances to both Great and Little Killaries are seen, and just below at your feet the narrow passage between the main land and the island on which you stand. It is through this narrow water-way that the canoes go as a short cut from the Little to the Great



Inishbarna Island. The Mark to shew course into the Great Killary.

Killary, and *vice versâ*. The tide sometimes sets through this opening with great force, and some knowledge is required to make the journey safely. Inishbarna abounds with white heather, and is often visited to obtain that luck-bringing blossom.

At night the Killary is still, of course, most dangerous to enter, as there are no lights of any de-

scription to guide the mariner's course. Most assuredly lighthouses ought to be placed to shew the entrance to this grand natural harbour, which could easily take the whole of our fleet, and where, too, they could run for absolute shelter in any state of the weather. Enormous sums—many millions—are being spent in making artificial harbours when here is one ready made and not used. The day will come when England will bitterly repent this neglect.

The Poet Laureate, in the same prose article to which reference has been made, wrote that only two things are needed to make Ireland the most attractive country in the world—a love of cleanliness and a love of flowers. It is distressing, and I agree with him, to see cottage after cottage, from one end of the island to the other, without a creeper against its walls, without a flower in its precincts.

The Irish Celt, unlike his ancient predecessor, is devoid of artistic feeling. Hard times and sufferings leave no place for luxuries. But I think a third requirement may be added to make Connemara at any rate idealistically perfect.

The observant English visitor will notice the dearth of small birds, those beautiful songsters who charm all foreigners paying a visit to our shores. Mile after mile of wild, grand scenery will be passed, and the sole representatives of bird life seen on wing or ground are large black crows in flocks, and occasional magpies. Both these birds have been protected by the halo of foolish superstition from time immemorial, their death by violence being considered unlucky to the perpetrators.

The crow might, with advantage to everybody, be



View from Inishbarna Island of the entrances to the Killaries. Canoes are seen making for the Straits between the Island and main land.

reduced in number, as it is a deadly enemy to all small birds, killing them, eating their eggs, and even preying upon small chickens round the cabins. Yet, in spite of this, the natives let these birds multiply and grow strong in the land. Irish superstition is fathomless and irradicable. Increased knowledge of natural science and general education are the only hopes for the future. An occasional wren or robin is to be met with where there are thorn hedges or holly trees, but such spots are unfortunately rare in Connemara. Still the holly-trees on the mountain sides going down to the waters of the Little Killary, a sharp drop of 250 feet to Salruck, are a fine sight to see. They are truly magnificent, and when in full red or yellow berry, gorgeous. Even the *cheep, cheep* of the ubiquitous sparrow is uncommon.

Trees are scarce. Yet in no part of Ireland are evident signs wanting to shew that woods once covered the land. Roots of trees of the largest size are dug up in every bog when the turf for fuel is cut. The standing stumps of many gigantic monsters shew that the destruction has not been of any very ancient date. Further, the local names in Irish for many of the hills, valleys, mountains, and plains have forests, woods, groves, or trees for their English equivalents. As a writer of old expressed it, concerning one estate of a vast number of acres: "You must take a breathing gallop to find a stick large enough to beat a dog." For the last two hundred years at least the woods have been destroyed with the most criminally thoughtless prodigality. No doubt what timber there is about is freely stolen by the people. Young writes that he was told the peasants had an aversion to a tree; at

the earliest age they steal it for a walking-stick, afterwards for a spade handle; later for a car shaft, and later still for a cabin rafter. But he indignantly says: "Is it the consumption of sticks and handles that has destroyed millions of acres? Absurdity! The profligate, prodigal, worthless landowner cuts down his acres and leaves them unfenced against cattle, and then he has the impudence to charge the scarcity of trees to the walking-sticks of the poor!"

History tells the same sad story. Ancient manuscripts are extant in which mention is made of woods existing in Connemara and neighbourhood, among which are these: Sylan, near Tuam; Carantrila, near Dunmore; Beagh, near Dunmore; Dalgan River, Killtrasna, near Headford; Kellysgrove, near Ballinasloe; Derrygimla, near Leenane; Woodlawn, near Ballinasloe; Derreen, near Ballyglunin; Pollnacreeva and Kildaree, near Dunmore.

Did not the London City Companies sell no less than ten thousand pounds' worth of timber alone—an enormous sum of money for those days—out of the province of Ulster in King James's reign? Much of Ireland's arboreal clothing in other parts found its way similarly in a cash shape into English pockets.

But Ireland could grow trees again; the luxuriance of the hollies, birches, and mountain ash of Salruck and a few other spots in Connemara prove this, so that the sad loss of trees generally is the more deplorable. Small birds, too, cannot exist without them. With the advent of trees will therefore be the advent of song. This present Irish country silence is therefore saddening, because one knows it is unnecessary, and only due to a

course of wrong-headedness and short-sightedness on the part of man through many generations.

But where Nature has prevented man exercising his destroying, despotic sway things are different. Sea-birds are plentiful on the coast, and still more so on the islands lying out in the Atlantic—the various species of seagull, the cormorant, and the oyster-catcher in vast numbers. On the seaweed-clad little promontories of the fiord, quite inland, the heron is often seen on its tall legs gazing dreamily at the receding water on the look-out for small pollack and other fry. If approached too closely it lazily flaps its big parallelogram-like wings and flops off sluggishly to another finger-tip of land not far away. The heron is the weather omen bird, steadfastly believed in, and probably with much reason, by weatherglassless meteorological forecasters. When the bird flies high in the middle of the day it is a sign that dry weather will continue; when the flights are low, and the bird frequently stops, rain may be expected. In Ireland its flights are generally low, with frequent stops. Ireland unquestionably has its full share of rain, but that matters little. One goes prepared for showers, and to catch a cold is exceptional.

CHAPTER III.

The Lesser Killary—The Pipe Cemetery—Salruck.

The Lesser Killary, only about three miles long, runs inland, at a sharp angle from the mouth of the Great, up to Salruck. This name is said to be derived from a certain Saint Rock, who once, at some uncertain date, had his abode there at the end of the Little Killary at the bottom of the valley.

He was most attentive to his devotions, but once, getting lax—a saint often finds it difficult to live up to his reputation—the Devil took advantage of his temporary aberration and proceeded to bind him with a chain. As he was completing the investiture the wind blew the holy man's vestment apart, and the Unholy One saw there a cross, which made him jump.

He did not lose his hold—the Devil is loth to leave go—on the end of the chain, but he jumped with it in his hand right over the mountain into the Great Killary on the other side, and the chain, cutting deep into the mountain, scored out the present Pass of Salruck.

Since then the spot has naturally been sacred, and the place where the saint dwelt was turned into the favourite burial-ground of the district.

The spot is most confusing, as the photograph shews—and no wonder, for the scene itself at first sight



Salruck. The Little Killary, near the Pipe Cemetery. Mweelrea in the distance.

reminds one more than anything else of the back-yard of a country town grocer's shop, where odds and ends are deposited. A strange medley of old pieces of wood, like remains of broken-up packing-cases, sticking up here and there, an occasional intact though lid-less shallow deal box, two feet by one, half full of sawdust, and a few black bottles, apparently flung away, which have rolled into crevices between heaps of slab-like stones resembling paving-stones, but not neatly squared off as we see them in the streets.

The dispelling of the resemblance is due to the thick overhanging ash-trees, whose trunks shew centenarian age, and whose interlacing branches form a protecting lace-work against the sky. The spot is really, as we have said, a God's acre, and its disguising, distressful untidiness is, we are sorry to say, very characteristic of many other old Irish burial-places. Rotten boughs from the trees have fallen all over the ground, ferns grow up here and there, and rank undergrowth of grass and bramble partially hide the evidences of mortality. Strangers, visiting the place without knowing what they were going to see, have exclaimed, in our hearing, "What does it all mean—what is it?"

A very curious old custom is associated with interments here, which has made the place famous even beyond the limits of Western Ireland. A box of pipes—short clays—is brought with each corpse, and a pipe with tobacco served out to each mourner. The pipes are smoked after the earth has been filled in, and a mound of stones raised above the grave; the ashes are knocked out on the top and the pipes broken or left behind.

The small boxes seen in the photograph, with remains of sawdust in them, contained pipes used at various funerals. The origin of this singular custom is unknown, but it certainly is very expressively emblematic of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The empty black bottles I have seen on the site seem to point to the fact that other ceremonies are also indulged in at times by the mourners. The corpse, too, is borne three times round the cemetery, and only close relations carry it, preferably those of the same surname.

The odd pieces of planking seen in the photograph sticking up here and there are placed at the head and foot of the graves. There are also a few simple wooden crosses, but only one or two graves bear any inscriptions.

There is also a holy well in the cemetery, now filled up with rubbish, and two ash-trees growing in very close proximity to one another over two graves, which tradition asserts are the final resting-places of two lovers never united in life, but who departed on the same day, so that in death they were not divided. The superstitious see in the two trees, grown so close together, a similitude to the lives of those whose graves they cover.

The situation of this unique cemetery is lovely. It lies at the bottom of a valley at the end of the Lesser Killary, quite by itself, away from all houses, with a small trout stream bubbling and bustling along close at hand. The entrance to it from the road, running from Salruck to Rosroe, is up a lane, beautifully and completely arched over with ash-trees, down which almost a veritable brook runs after rain. Ferns of many species, some rare—the *Osmunda* most common—decorate the



The "Pipe" Cemetery, Salrück.

roadside, and the two carnivorous plants, the sundew and the butterwort, are to be found in abundance on the banks amid the damp mosses.

A tiny Church of Ireland church, built by the Thomson family, occupies a magnificent position at the end of the Little Killary, not three hundred yards from the Pipe



Salruck Church, at the land end of the Little Killary.

Cemetery, and when I have been there the congregation, including the clergyman, who came on a bicycle from Aasleagh at the finger-tip of the Great Killary, some thirteen miles, to officiate, used to average about seven.

The tiny church is seen as a white speck in the view of the road by the side of the Little Killary, and the

superbly grand view from the church-door is feebly portrayed in another picture. Unfortunately, photography conveys not the exquisite colouring.

In this district the other churches are at Aasleagh, and in the grounds of Kylemore. There are two Roman Catholic chapels in the neighbourhood, one about a mile from Leenane and another a mile or two on the road to Kylemore after leaving the junction of the Salruck road with the main road.

The road from Salruck to Rosroe is most fascinating. One never tires of it no matter how often it is traversed, for naught can stale its infinite variety. Physically it is an awful road—all ups and downs—a switchback of the roughest description, bad enough for horse vehicles—one would say fatal for motors, yet I have known a motor do the journey in safety.

Yes, this part of the Lesser Killary is lovely. To see the moon rise over the hills at the back while the sun sinks in a blood-red, golden ball on the west before it plunges into the Atlantic is an experience. Nature, in her most sensitive, thrilling aspect can scarcely be realized till one has visited the Little Killary. I have seen the sun rise from Tenerife's Peak; I have seen the grand view from the Mountain House, in the Catskill Mountains; I have seen the view from the Stalheimscleft in Norway; I have gazed with awe over the eight-mile crater of Palma in the Canaries—but I have seen no view of such peculiar beauty of its own like that in the Little Killary. Description fails one—comparisons are only then left, and they are feeble in the extreme.

There are many other exquisitely beautiful spots



Looking up to the finger-tip of the Little Killary. The road from Rosrce to Salruck. Salruck Church is seen in the distance.

throughout Connemara, with magnificent views and unequalled facilities for sea-bathing, sea-fishing, and also trout-fishing, all practically close together, where reasonable hotels or pensions would certainly succeed, and be a distinct boon to the tourist. At present the most enticing bits of Connemara have to be rapidly driven through and not explored, nearly all the existing inns being in the less interesting spots. And there must be an untold number of delightful retreats for artists, anglers, and health-seekers at present absolutely unknown. Africa is getting much more popularized than many parts of Ireland.

One spot, at any rate, is entrancingly beautiful—Rosroe on the Great Killary, at its mouth just sheltered from the rude, overpowering greatness of the Atlantic rollers by guardian islands. How ideal is the view from the little cottage lying in solitary beauty, with sea close in front, queen of all around! And then to throw wide open the French windows in early morning before anyone is about, when man the bustler, the destroyer of peace, is at home at rest; to breathe in the keen, fresh, virginal air, which seems to saturate the senses, to intoxicate the imagination, to waken mystic, subtle memories of former times, may be in other far-off countries, under other circumstances; to watch the light fleecy bits of mist, like angel snowflakes, wither up and gradually, imperceptibly vanish into mysterious nothingness as the sun attains a slight glow of warmth on the yellowish greens and purples of the precipices just opposite across the water; perhaps to hear, as one often does, the fizz of myriad mackerel playing and foaming the water up only a few

yards distant, for all the world like a newly-opened gigantic bottle of champagne. This is life. This is balm to the unrest of troublous human nature; a nerve-restorer of priceless value. This is communing with Nature in her most beneficent mood—and this is Connemara.

CHAPTER IV.

Fish in the Killaries.

Both Killaries abound in fish, though the means for saving them are deficient. Mackerel run up in great clumps, as they are locally called, and are surrounded by seine nets, in the meshes of which they become entangled. The seines cannot be "drawn," as is done at Seaton in Devonshire and other pebbly or sandy shores, the steep, rocky nature of the Killary banks prohibiting that method. Whiting are plentiful, and are caught on bottom lines with mussel bait. Bream and grey gurnet also abound, and pollack near the mouth around the islands. "Gunners" up to eight pounds in weight, and occasionally more, can be caught in abundance round the rocky, seaweed-clad promontories, but the wrasse, or *labrus*, is a poor table-fish unless stewed with onions.

Dog-fish swarm all over the Killaries, and many approach in size and voracity sharks. They are an unmitigated nuisance. I have often put down a long line, with one hundred hooks, in the Great Killary, only to catch dog-fish, whereas I wanted and expected conger-eels. "Oft expectation fails, and most oft there where most it promises." On a long line laid early in the morning we frequently caught twenty huge dog-fish, like small sharks, most of them being between four and five feet six inches

in length. To kill these monsters requires some manual exercise, and I found a tent-mallet, a hardwood bludgeon, and a huge gaff most useful for the sanguinary purpose.

But why not eat dog-fish? The Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee have proposed that they shall be eaten, and in order to encourage the taste for the dainty, recommend that small lots of the fish should be sent to county and



A catch of Dog-fish, with the Long Line which caught them. The Fish displayed upon a Canoe turned over.

municipal cookery classes. This is an excellent idea. At present it is prejudice pure and simple which prevents this plentiful source of food being cooked and eaten. We eat conger-eel—no more dainty dish is there than well-cooked conger pie—and yet we turn up our fastidious noses at its equally clean, chicken-like fleshed congener, the dog-fish. The name is against it. Were it known as,

say, "sea-chicken," a great step would be taken towards popularizing this plentiful denizen of the sea all round our coasts, at present wasted.

It is quite customary to simply kill and fling them back into the sea, so that not only their flesh, but also their skin—the source of shagreen—are wasted. The only use I have ever found for them has been to give them to fishermen for baiting lobster- and crab-pots. Yet the meat is remarkably white and clean-looking. The dorsal, nail-like, or rather tiger-claw-like spine adjoining the back fin I have always cut out, as it makes an excellent charm, when the base is capped with silver or gold, for a lady's chain. This sharp-pointed claw sticks right up from the dorsal line of the back, and grows from a living matrix. When the fish strikes directly upwards it must prove a deadly weapon of offence.

Besides the ordinary dog-fish, one catches in the course of bottom-fishing around those coasts numbers of the tope (*Galeus vulgaris*), or Sweet William—a sarcastic name given on account of the ugly, rough appearance of the brute. The instinctively creeping feeling imparted by the living dog-fish of any species is, I am convinced, due to the almost mesmeric, baneful influence of the creature's dark eyes. Their expression is veiled or obscured; they look at you boldly, yet placidly, as if fully *aware* of all that was going on, with sinister, untroubled regard.

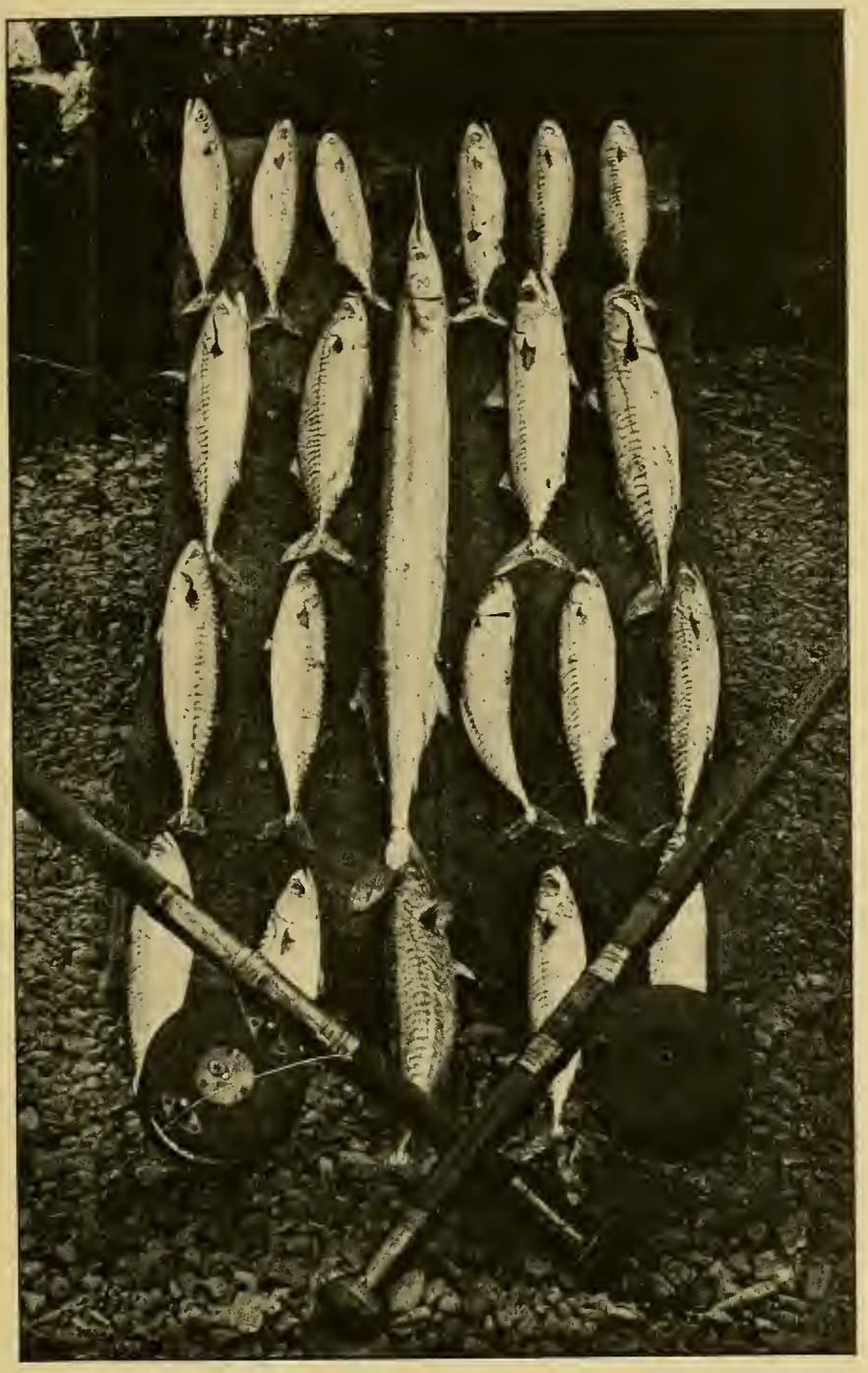
But abundance of excellent fish abound, at times swarm, in the Killaries. The writer, with one or two others in the canoe, have often caught in two hours' evening fishing on hand-lines, when the canoe has been anchored,

from one hundred to two hundred fine large whiting. These are caught with mussel bait on jiggers or paternosters about one foot from the bottom of the sea in the Great Killary at an expansion of the sea called the Big Bay. Large pollack we have also caught in quantities round the islands at the entrances to the two Killaries.

The mackerel fishing with sea-rods when the canoe is being rowed about is splendid. We have caught quantities up to two and a half pounds in weight. The best tackle we found was a fine line with three or four feet of gut at the end, the hook baited with a bit of shining mackerel-skin cut off from the tail-end of a fish. Cannibal is an epithet very applicable to fish.

Among the islands when mackerel fishing and when plenty of mackerel were about we caught gar-fish by trailing a line behind similarly baited as for mackerel. You cannot catch gar-fish so near to the canoe as you can mackerel.

The gar-fish (*Belone vulgaris*) affords better sport than mackerel, but it is difficult to land. The fish runs from two to three feet in length, is narrow, and has a long, four-inch beak-like mouth, studded inside with sharp teeth. The proboscis gives the fish a woodcock or snipe appearance. Should the fish take the bait only on one side of the thin mouth, you naturally pull it up sideways on and lose it, the mouth giving way. About once in three bites the fish will take the bait fairly, and then you succeed. They possess a strong mackerel smell, and have light green coloured bones; but when cut up into small pieces of two-inch width I find they are a most dainty dish, resembling



Some Mackerel and a Gar-fish with the Rods which caught them

mackerel, but with firmer flesh and more delicate flavour. The local fishermen throw them away as valueless. I have seen them occasionally on London fish stalls at two shillings and sixpence each. Other names for this curiosity of the sea are Spanish mackerel, long-nose, snipe-eel, sea-needle.

Seals abound in the Killaries, and seldom did we go out without one raising his round, old-fashioned, semi-human head above the surface, gaze at us in the canoe with calm, intelligent eyes, and when he had apparently satisfied his curiosity, sink quietly from our view below the water. There is something uncanny about the seal. You suddenly look up whilst fishing and find his eyes upon you, may be only a boat's length or two off.

Plaice also we have caught in the evenings off the islets at the mouth of the Little Killary on bottom-lines baited with mussels. An evening's catch—about two hours—usually came to from ten to fifty fish.

The views at the mouth of this charming fiord, looking up it till the eye rests with peaceful satisfaction on tiny Salruck Church, are beautiful. Often when fishing at this sweet spot, rainbow after rainbow, sometimes two together, were seen apparently close at hand, one arm of the richly-coloured prismatic arch arising from the sea, the other ending on the mountains. The vivid brilliancy of these Killary rainbows I have never seen equalled or approached elsewhere.

It is good to see the sun set, to watch it dip down, down into the sea, far away on the open Atlantic, after a gorgeous blaze of ever-changing myriad colours,

for it affords a happy memory never to be forgotten. And then—

> "Soon as the evening shades prevail,
> The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
> And nightly to the listening earth
> Repeats the story of her birth."

At no place, as at the mouth of the Little Killary, have I been more reminded of Turner's pictures.

In the Lesser Killary are oyster beds, but they have been sadly neglected. The molluscs, those that are of any size, are fat and exceedingly well-flavoured. They are quite equal to the Whitstable natives, and yet they have never been commercially put upon the market. Ireland, in many directions, has yet to be exploited.

The salmon-fishing in the Killary neighbourhood has been a failure for some years, though fair rod catches have been made in Lakes Muck and Fee.

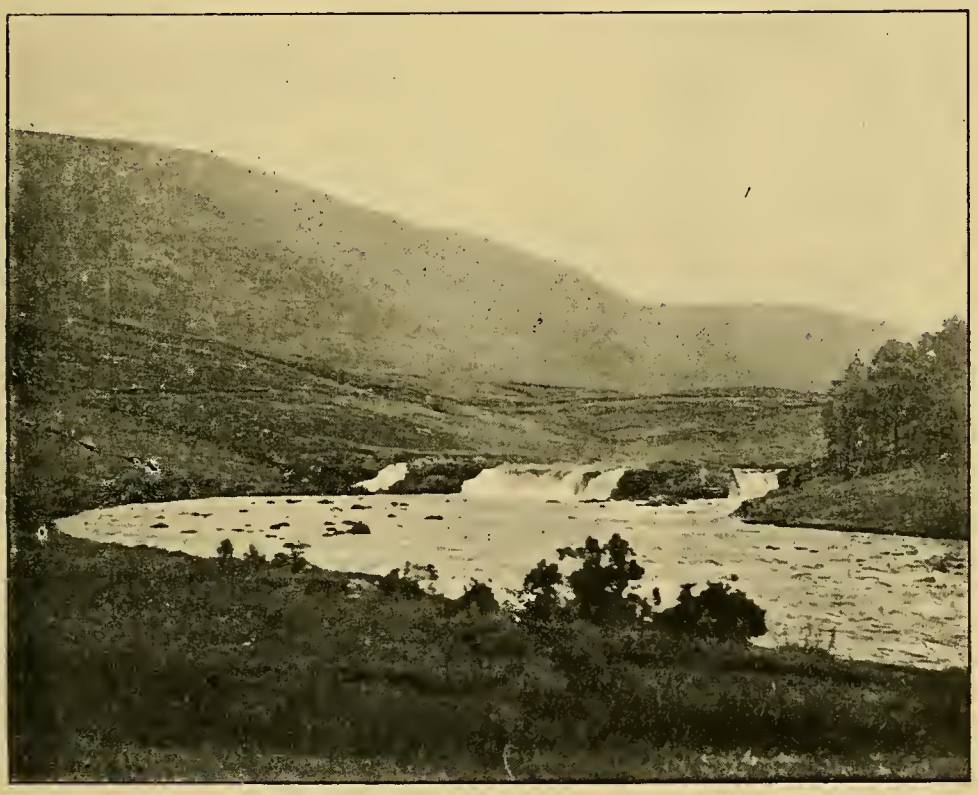
The Erriff river, which flows into the finger-tip of the Killary over some most picturesque falls—"where sea and river meet"—is probably one of the best salmon rivers in Ireland.

The capricious herring is a frequenter of the coast and bays of this part of Ireland, as elsewhere, but its advent in thousands can never be foretold. How singular it is that you never by any chance catch a herring on a hook!

A capital centre for both sea, trout, and pike fishing is at Leenane, where there is a really comfortable and moderate hotel, whose proprietor does all that is possible, and with marked success, to afford his visitors sport.

For a holiday, for a thorough change of air and scene, a visit to Connemara is probably more beneficial than a

visit to the northern parts of the Continent. The contrast certainly is greater. The dress of the peasants is just as different, the manner of life and locomotion strangely foreign (panniers are still used for carrying fish and turf, and pillion on horseback for man and wife a common sight), and the language is much less understandable than is French or German. In many parts of

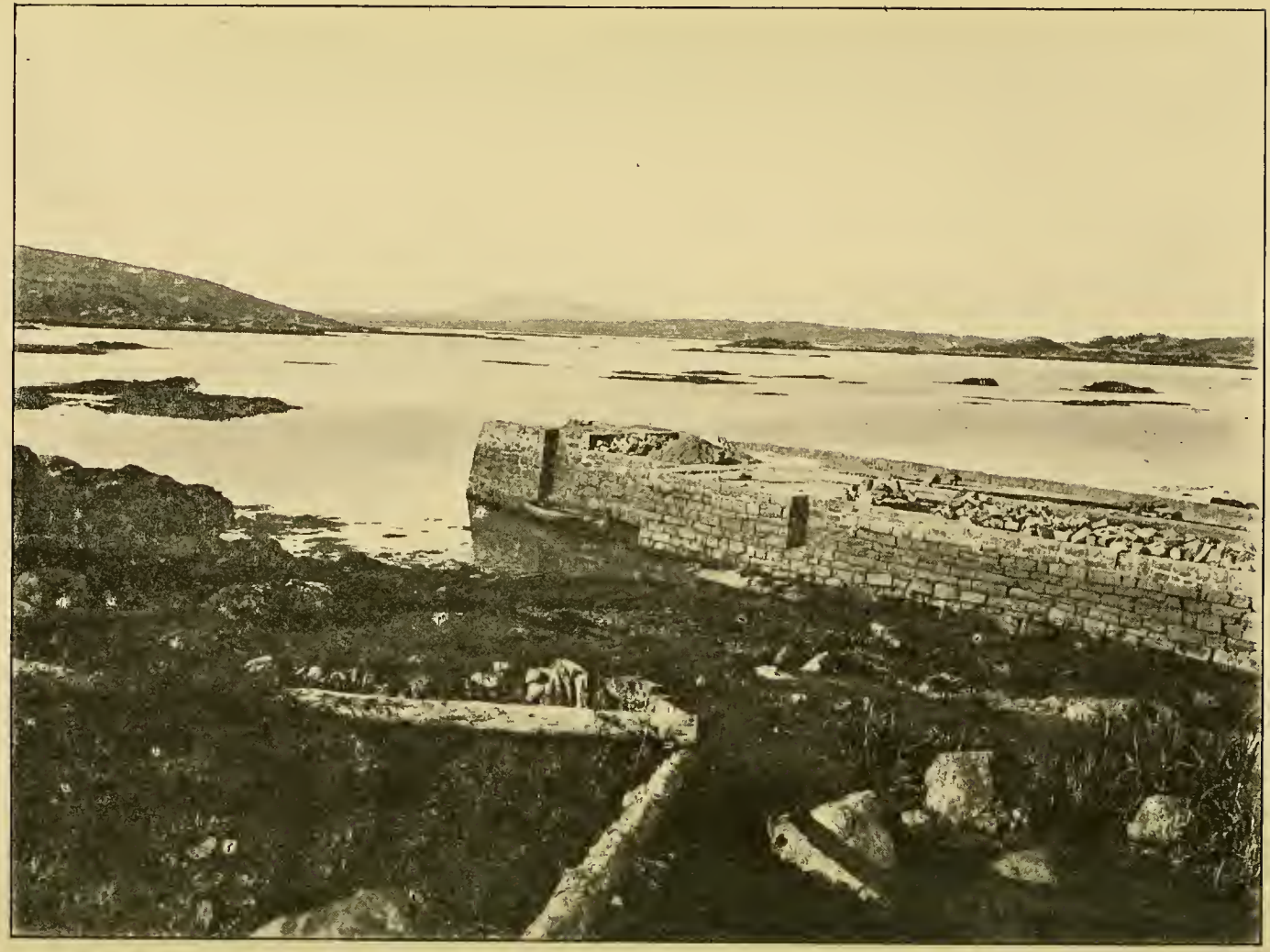


The Erriff River, Great Killary. "Where sea and river meet."

Connemara and on the adjacent islands to this day Irish is more used than English by the peasants among themselves, and we have met several who knew no English at all. Connemara is, in short, more reminiscent of Spain and Italy than of any other countries. And it is now not difficult to get to. The Irish mail leaves Euston at

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8.45 p.m., arriving at Holyhead at 2.17 a.m., where trains from the North also join. Dublin is reached at 6 a.m., and the Connemara express leaves Broadstone Station at 7 a.m., arriving at Recess at 12.15 p.m., whence a charming drive through almost unequalled wild scenery, along Lough Inagh, takes you to Leenane, the centre of the district. The time from Euston to Recess is only fifteen hours and a half, and of course there is a daylight route as well.



Cashel Bay. Islands just appearing as tide falls.

CHAPTER V.

Cashel—The Twelve Pins—Carna—Connemara Roads—The Irishman and his Pig.

The southern part of Connemara, from Cashel, is not so well known as it deserves. Let the picturesque painter, as well as the angler, go to that part of Ireland, and he will find endless variety of shape, colour, and character in the deliciously irregular hills and mountains.

Cashel Bay, when the tide is low, and the nearly numberless yellow islands appear as by magic all over its surface, is like a crystallized dream from the Arabian Nights; and then the Zetland Arms Hotel, at the head of the lake-like expanse of water, is a charmingly home-like hostel for angler, artist, or health-seeker. Would there were more such in this part of Connemara! When I was last there they actually had a German waiter! The incongruity was obvious—he should have been a loquacious Irishman.

The nearest station to Cashel is Recess, from which it is four and a half miles distant, the drive not of a very interesting character. The hotel has good lake fishing, which is free for visitors staying in the house.

The Twelve Pins of Binabola are said to occupy some twenty-five square miles. I should think they do. The beauty of these mountains is great, and as they vary their relative distance to one another at every turn of the

road, they never lose their charm. The best view of them as a whole is undoubtedly from Cashel, on the south of Recess Station. When looking northwards from that spot you see their curious denticulated or serrated peaks — jagged, rounded, smooth, conical — silhouetted against the sky in far-away pale outlines which are almost ethereal, the soothing yellows, orange, gorgeous purples, and brilliant greens of bog and hill in the near distance aiding a delightfully artistic scene. As a matter of fact the peaks are more than twelve, but the dozen have obvious dignity over the remainder. They become dear friends, as throughout Connemara some of them are present at some point or other in every view. You can't get away from them in Connemara, and you don't want to. Your p.p.c. card on leaving their society would contain the postscript—"With deep regret."

An interesting drive can be taken from Cashel or Recess round by Carna, but the roads are not kept in good condition, and consequently are bumpy. The county is bare of trees and lonesome. At Carna there is a quiet, comfortable hotel, with old-fashioned enclosed garden, but no view. A bed can also be had over a grocer's shop at Kilkieran should the traveller care to take that route back to Recess, but the journey (which the writer has made) hardly repays the trouble. The scenery is not for one moment comparable to that north of the railway line. At some little lakes near Kilkieran, however, the writer caught some fair-sized brown trout without much exertion, so that probably the lakes, not being fished at all, would yield good sport to the persistent angler.



The Pins of Connemara. View looking north from Cashel.

But Connemara has one want—a want in capital letters—roads. At present the main trunk roads are far too few and circuitous. They become most monotonous, and one has to go over and over them again to get to places at no great distance as the crow flies. Yet engineering difficulties are slight and the best road material everywhere ready to hand on the spot. After the famine, about 1847, and since then at times of distress, excellently planned roads have been begun in various parts of Connemara to connect routes in most desirable positions, often to cut off miles of road circumlocution. Such, for example, was the short "relief" road, commenced during a famine some seven years ago, to connect the Salruck road with the Tully Cross road across one, and the shortest, side of a triangle. To arrive at the end of the Lesser Killary at Salruck the two longer sides of the triangle have now to be traversed. The immense advantage of this short mile, or mile and a half at most, to the district would be inestimable. It would also open up some of the grandest scenery in Ireland, yet it remains just half-finished, ending at the top of the hill overlooking Salruck with curious, startling abruptness. Up to the present the money expended on this road has been absolutely wasted. I know of no country where public money is more wasted than in Ireland.

Another road which also might advantageously be finished lies along the southern shore of the Great Killary and runs from Rosroe. This route would supply a much-needed alternate route from Letterfrack, Renvyle, and Tully to Leenane. At present it exists in a half-finished state, but quite impassable to vehicles.

The remains of a track are also still visible on the northern side of the Killary, leading to a truly magnificent expanse of sandy sea-shore on the extreme north-west entrance to the fiord, which makes an unusually suitable bathing-place, with beautiful scenery all round. But this favoured spot, called by us the Mayo Sands, is now practically unknown, the old road is grass-covered, and in places has trees and shrubs growing over it. A comparatively small expense would throw this Riviera-like drive open. At present it can only be reached by boat.

A short piece of connecting road, imperatively needed, would materially shorten the route from Recess to Leenane. At present one has to drive, quite out of the way, nearly into the Kylemore Pass, and then double back again for some miles over the same track of country, the road from Recess joining the Leenane road at a long, attenuated angle. The annoying part of the journey is that you can see all the time the piece of road thus absolutely taking you in the opposite direction. A short juncture piece of road would here save this terribly irritating duplicity, and be of universal and lasting benefit to natives as well as tourists.

A landowner in this part of Ireland, whom I know, was desirous of getting his tenants to adopt a cleanlier mode of living, and particularly to persuade them to build outhouses for their live stock, so that the time-honoured, communal, Noah's Ark arrangement of the one living-room in the cabin for man, beast, and bird might be changed. One of his better-class tenants, in a fairly well-to-do way, had a large yard, with the usual dung-

heap, of course, in front of his door, but where there was ample space for outhouses. So repeatedly in passing my friend looked into the cabin, over the half-door, and said, "Maloney, you have plenty of room, why not build a separate house for the pigs; it is a pity to see them running all over the floor, and it would be much better for the health of yourselves and the children?" Several times he called, and the frequency of the suggestion seemed at last to have fixed the idea in Maloney's head and roused him to action, for he was on good terms with his landlord, and wished to stand well with him. After several weeks of incubation action ensued, and eventually Maloney sent one of his children up to the house to say that the next time the master was that way would he give him a call, for he had carried into practice the advice about the pigs. My friend lost no time in calling on Maloney, well pleased to think the advent of a better style of living had begun on his estate. Arriving at Maloney's farm, he looked round the yard, but could see no alteration in the state of things. The usual dung-heap was still prominent as heretofore, but no piggeries were visible in the yard. He put his head in over the half-door of the cabin and hailed Maloney, "Where's the new house for the pigs?" "Step forward," says Maloney, "sure it's straight in front of you." And there, sure enough, on one side of the interior wall of the cabin was a neatly-made miniature cabin, carefully thatched, with a half-door, and finished off in exact imitation of the full-sized structure; and the contented grunts emanating from it shewed it to be then inhabited. Now this is no good story, but an actual fact,

and it had nothing of the joke attached to it, but was a serious endeavour on the peasant's part to please the master and carry out his wishes. That his pigs should sleep outside, apart from the family, had never entered Maloney's head as a possibility.

But, though Connemara is a delightful country to travel in, yet it has its sad, depressing side. Deserted homesteads are everywhere; roofless cabins predominant. Often on some railway journeys at every station on the line I have seen farewell "wakes," as they are termed, held, and the terribly pathetic picture witnessed of farewells—many obviously for ever in this world—taking place. This exodus is so draining the country that very soon only the old, feeble, incapable, and hopeless will be left. In 1841 the population of Ireland was about eight millions and a quarter; now it numbers less than four and a half millions; or, to look at it in another light, in 1841 the population of Ireland was over three times as great as that of Scotland, now it is thirteen thousand less. Already the unions and workhouses are too big for the requirements of the remnant of the population.*

It may be said of Connemara that God has done a great deal for the district, man little. It is time man woke up and did more.

* Since the above was written the emigration returns to December 31st, 1905, have been issued. They shew that the total number of emigrants who left Irish ports since the returns began (May 1st, 1851) is 4,028,589—2,092,154 males and 1,936,436 females. Last year, I am glad to observe, there were 6243 less emigrants than in 1904, the total for last year being 31,172, three-fourths of whom emigrated to the United States of America.

CHAPTER VI.

Clifden—Kille—The Coral Strand—Cleggan—Letterfrack—Kylemore.

Clifden, the capital, as it may be called, of Connemara, is the terminus of the single-line light railway from Galway, forty-nine miles distant.

Before the railway was made Bianconi's* morning-car, which left the office in Eyre Square, Galway, reached Clifden in the evening of the same day, not at all bad travelling for those times. It is remarkable how much this country owes to Italians. As in London the chief public feeding arrangements are in their hands, so in Ireland the inauguration of the long-car system is due to a native of Tregolo in Lombardy, not far from Como. As penny ices have in London led up to gigantic restaurants, popular theatres, and electric light companies, so in Ireland the vendor of cheap prints in the streets of Dublin developed into the great carrier of everybody and everything all over Ireland. Bianconi, thirty years after he started his first car, was conveying passengers and goods over 1633 miles, and working *daily* 3266 miles of road. This remarkable man and pioneer died in 1875 at

* A very interesting life of Charles Bianconi by his daughter Mrs. Morgan John O'Connell was published by Chapman and Hall in 1878.

the ripe age of ninety years. In Bianconi's day the long-cars were known as "The Bians"—a nickname now I think quite extinct.

In a paper read at the Dublin meeting of the British Association in 1857, Bianconi referred to the benefit to the poor people his facilities for the transit of goods had conferred. For instance, in the more remote parts of Ireland purchasers were obliged to give eight or nine pence a yard for calico for shirts, which they afterwards bought for three or four pence. The poór people therefore, who previously could ill afford to buy one shirt, were enabled to buy two for a less price than they had paid for one, and in the same ratio other commodities came into general use at reduced prices. In that same paper Bianconi said, "During the long period of forty-two years that my establishment is now in existence the slightest injury has never been done by the people to my property or that intrusted to my care"—a fact which surely speaks eloquently in favour of the Irish peasants as a law-abiding race when they wish so to be. It is undoubtedly true—and the official statistics of crime endorse the statement—that there is a remarkable absence of crime connected with opposition to trade or manufacture in Ireland. It is a great pity that the want of coal and iron in the south and west of Ireland prevents manufactures arising, for the Irish are very suited for such labour.

Clifden is a simple little Irish town of the usual description. The three streets forming a triangle are wide and spacious, though the houses and shops on each side are poor looking and not in any way smart. The

magnificent distances in the small compass of space are totally disproportionate to the importance of the dwellings, and, as is the case with many other similar towns in the west and north of Ireland, are singularly reminiscent of out-of-the-way small towns in the United States of America. They bear an unfinished, untidy, haphazard appearance. There are a few shops in the triangle, and at one large open angle is a huge pair of scales for public use, and here is held a potato and turf market at intervals. In these shops the commodities are hardware, hosiery, and groceries, and most of them are general stores more or less. Nearly every other house in the town sells intoxicating liquors. Such a huge proportion of public houses to so small a space of earth's surface I suppose exists nowhere else, at least not to my knowledge. About one third of the houses, chiefly called grocers from the superscription above them, are associated with this trade.

The railway station is about two hundred yards from the eastern angle of the triangle of roads. The two hotels, very modest indeed in every respect, are in the street running straight on from the station, and they are nearly exactly opposite to each other.

Clifden is beautifully situated above Clifden Bay, itself an inlet or small fiord of Ardbear Bay. It is quite a modern village, for it was founded in the reign of George IV. by John D'Arcy of Clifden Castle, a plain unimportant house about one and a half miles west of the place. When he bought the site in 1815 and built the mansion it contained only one house. By 1835 three hundred houses had arisen.

D'Arcy, like many other energetically minded men,

was in advance of his time, and the speculation was a failure, the family coming to grief and the Encumbered Estates' Court. However, the enterprise was a distinct boon to travellers, as the village provided a halting place and hotels.

Quite close to the streets the Owenglin river makes a pleasingly picturesque waterfall of a broken character

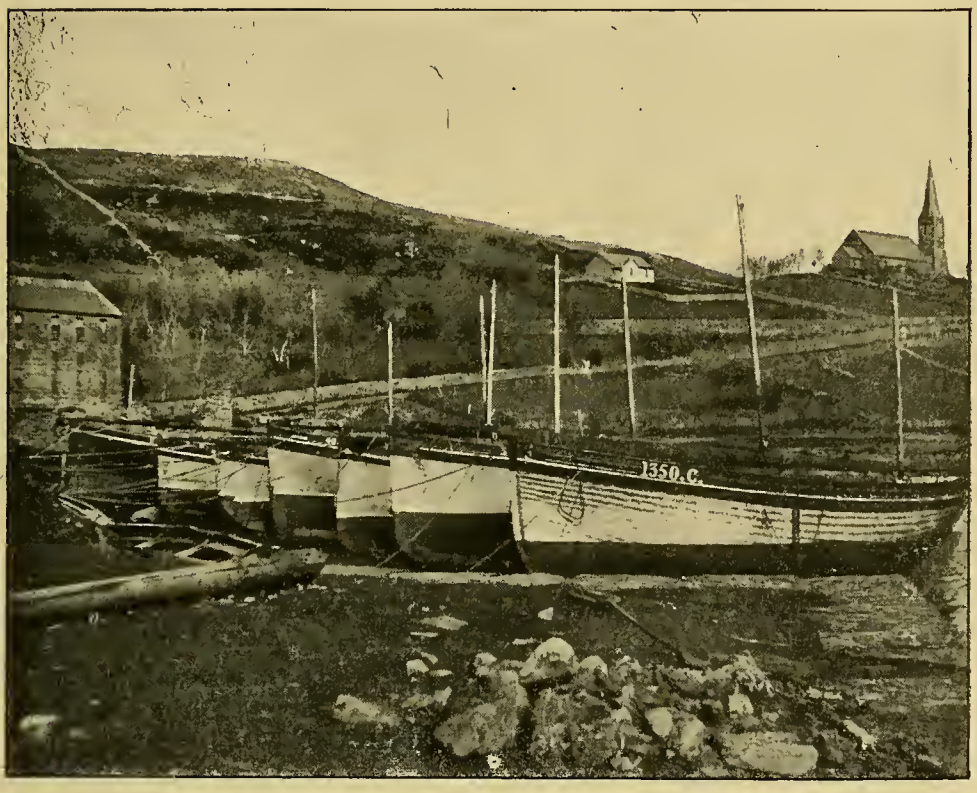


Clifden Waterfall.

after passing under a bridge, above which the road is carried. This river originates among the magnificent Twelve Pins of Connemara, and passing through the triple-arched bridge, most antique in appearance, falls at a right-angle almost over a mass of rocks, sparkling in a thousand eddies and whirling off at another sharp angle

to the right through the recesses of a gorge, over which another bridge is placed, and so to the tip of the fiord.

Another short walk is from the other angle of the triangle, past the public scales and market place, and down a path to the sea by the side of the little inlet. At the quay are some dilapidated warehouses, looking as if



On the Quay, Clifden. Fishing-boats partly owned by the Congested Districts Board in the foreground.

they had seen better days, and drawn up in a line are the fishing-boats of Clifden, if they are not all out at sea.

These fishing-boats are fine, beamy, seaworthy little craft, and are mostly the joint property of the Congested Districts Board and the fishermen who sail them. The idea of thus helping the men by lending them money to

acquire boats and proper gear for fishing on easy terms, or by partly paying the cost of the same and sharing in the proceeds of the industry, is theoretically excellent. In practice, however, I rather fear the system tends to destroy that spirit of enterprise and plucky endeavour which makes nations.

To bolster up a nation by Government money, given in any shape or way—I care not what—to people too indolent to help themselves, is never eventually advantageous to the recipients of the benefits. This continual dribbling of Government money, under whatever guise it may assume, is detrimental to moral erectness and manly perseverance, because it engenders the feeling that there is always the Government in the background to help in emergencies. This feeling is certainly prevalent among the peasants in the West of Ireland. At one place in Connemara I came across one of these Congested Districts Board's boats laid up during the fishing season, and I enquired why it was. A man at work close by, after some persuasion, told me the part-owner had obtained a grant from the Board and gone off on the spree, and the boat had never yet been to sea. I am afraid this case is not exceptional.

Walking still further along the quay by the side of the fiord and looking back a fine view of Clifden is obtained, when is seen how well placed is the town. The buildings run up from the stream's right bank to the top of a commanding bluff, well-furnished and productive gardens sloping down at the backs of the houses to the water's edge. Altogether the scene is distinctly pleasing and makes one realize the beauty of the place. This



Clifden, Connemara. View from Quay.

quay walk and the waterfall are the two, and the only objects of interest in Clifden, unless the traveller cares to go on and see the ruins of an old castle near the top of a hill further to the westward. Ruined castles are so plentiful in Ireland that they do not count for much.

There is an imposing Roman Catholic Church, with a conspicuous spire shewing well up on the top of the bluff, and having several white marble saintly statues around it. It is a singular feature of Ireland that the poorer the place seems to be, the grander is the local Roman Catholic Church, and certainly Clifden is a poor place—in time of potato failure a very poor place.

John Forbes, M.D., F.R.S., who wrote a sketchy book of travel in Ireland in 1853, says of Clifden: "Although I hardly know in what the charm consists, I have certainly seen no spot in Ireland which, from the attractiveness of mere locality, would claim my suffrage, as a place of residence, so entirely as Clifden. Over and above its scenic beauties, its position is such as to ensure for it every terrestrial and climatorial condition that is found most conducive to health." I can quite endorse this opinion. It is a pity more is not made of Clifden. As it is now, the traveller just uses it as a very temporary halting-place to take a meal at, and then drive on to Leenane, or at most spends one night there. But a good hotel—not in the squalid untidy streets, with nothing to look at but drinking shops—situated where there is a view of the sea, is very much needed, and should succeed during the summer season, and perhaps some day this will be built. Till then Clifden must be content to be delegated to the "how-do-you-do's" and "good-byes."

The road leaving Clifden for Letterfrack, Kylemore, Renvyle, and Leenane passes quite close to the Roman Catholic Church near the end of the Station road, bends up a long hill, and then pursues a long course northward.

After passing a school-house on the right, a side road bends sharply backwards and downwards, skirting a small inlet of the sea. This takes you to Kille, where is a large plainly-fronted house, the home of the Thompson



The Coral Strand, Kille, co. Galway.

family. About a mile further on, over some lonely, common-looking, short-turfed land by the sea, a natural curiosity is reached, which I have never seen even alluded to in any book, and which has never, to my knowledge, been before photographed.

It is the Coral Strand—to invent a name for the phenomenon. A pretty, tiny cove or bay of the sea is reached, glistening white with what at first sight

seems fine sand—but no sand is there, not a particle. This beautiful beach is entirely composed of coral—pure white coral, in pieces from the size of a quarter of an inch to two or three inches. In other words, the shore is a mass of broken-up pure white coral —not merely on the surface, but deep down, flung up by the waves. At low tide the living coral can be seen running out beneath the water on the shore. If only some use could be made of this isolated Irish freak of nature, it would be a good thing for the district. At present nothing is done with it, and very few indeed even know of the existence of the spot. I am not aware of any other coral-composed beach being known anywhere near it, or indeed anywhere else in Ireland.

Further along the main road from Clifden to Letterfrack a side road on the left leads off to Cleggan.

Cleggan is an absolutely insignificant, painfully-plain, out-of-the-world spot, with no attractions of any kind, which has simply been called into existence by the moneyed wand of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Here that Board carry on a fishing business, employing in it a vast amount of capital and annual expenditure. The piers and sea walls have been constructed at the cost of some thousands of pounds, and even yet the works are going on.

It is somewhat disheartening, after all the expenditure of money at Cleggan, to read in the Report of the Board that "the development of Cleggan, which otherwise is promising, has been checked by the absence of safe accommodation for boats in the bay, and the long distance that fish have to be carted in warm weather to

the railway." One would have thought these facts would have been known before expenditure at the spot was commenced. The long distance is now surely as heretofore, and the weather is no warmer than it used to be before the formation of the Congested Districts Board.

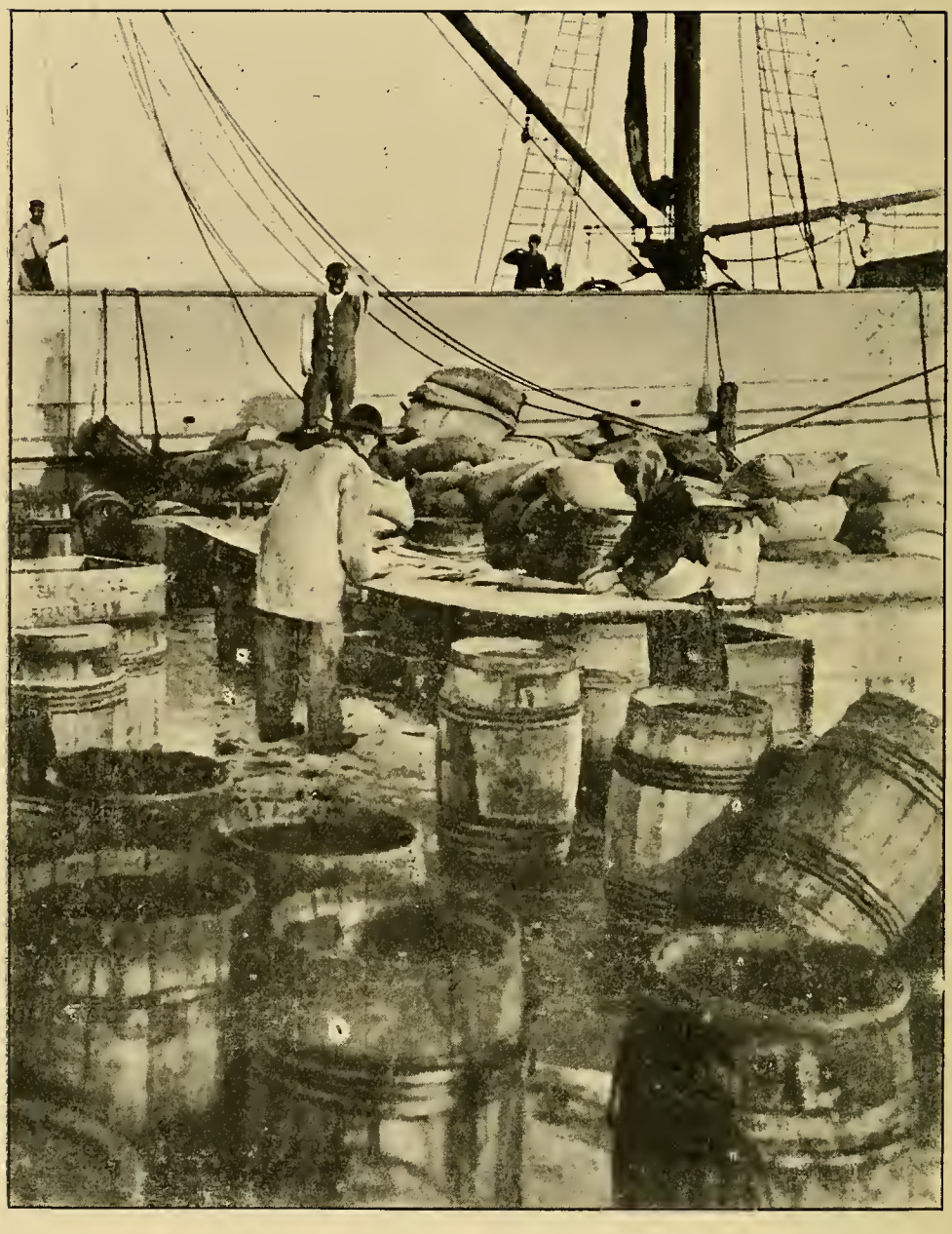
The Board run the fishing-boats as part owners, or have loans upon most of them, make the barrels (they made in the year ending March 31st, 1905, no less than 15,251), salt the fish, deal in ice, salt, and other requirements necessary for running a big wholesale trade in the salt and fresh fish line.

The annual Report shews that the Board practically run on "share system" 16 yawls and 77 "large fishing-boats."

In connection, too, with their fishing trade and other interests round the coast they own a steamer and charter others. That they own, the "Granuaile," has, up to the date mentioned, cost £39,485, and what the cost of officers and men has been the reports do not disclose.

I happened to be at Cleggan when a steamer called to take the barrels of salted mackerel and herring to Glasgow or Liverpool for transhipment to America. Women and men were employed on the quay salting and barrelling the fish. The advent of a steamer is *the* event in the stagnant life of Cleggan, which consists of just about half-a-dozen houses in two dismal dispiriting-looking rows. Without the Congested Districts Board's artificial aid the place would at once lapse into the forgetfulness whence it sprung.

I heard some bitter complaints from storekeepers in



Cleggan. Salting Mackerel on Quay. Steamer just arrived to take Barrels away.



Cleggan Pier. Steamer taking in Barrels of Fish.

Connemara that the Board, dealing in salt and ice, etc., had absolutely ruined their trade, as the Board could and did undersell them. Be that true or not, it is certainly a moot question whether a Government is wise in going in for commercial enterprises of this particularly risky character to benefit a comparatively small class. It is a moot question whether or not the thousands of pounds involved in the business might not be better spent in enterprises which aided a larger section of the public, and which would be more permanent in their effects. The old Romans thought the first consideration in the development of a country was good means of intercommunication between the various parts of it and communication with neighbouring countries.

Connemara imperatively needs roads and railways to develop and open up the country. If the money spent by the Congested Districts Board* in barrel-making,

* Some of the items of expenditure in this connection from the Report of the Congested Districts Board for the year ending March 31st, 1905, are interesting :—

Fish curing. Total expenditure from August 5th, 1891, to March 31st, 1905					£39,046
Instruction in fishing	,,	,,	,,	,,	12,300
Charter of steamers	,,	,,	,,	,,	6,301
Boats, nets, and gear	,,	,,	,,	,,	7,903
Teelin barrel-making	,,	,,	,,	,,	4,163
Downing's	,,	,,	,,	,,	1,778
Burton Port barrel-making		,,	,,	,,	9,143
Boat building	,,	,,	,,	,,	1,099
Steamer	,,	,,	,,	,,	39,485
Sinking Fund, No. 1	,,	,,	,,	,,	14,000
,, ,, No. 2 (steamer depreciation)			,,	,,	4,722

The cost of "Administration" (so called in the Report) is lumped together (so that it is impossible to tell how much is allocated to the above items) at £31,242 for the *one year* between April 1st, 1904, and March 31st, 1905.

steamers, honey-dealing, Exhibition at St. Louis (£532), Cork Exhibition (£613), lace for Paris Exhibition (£64), Dublin Exhibition (£27), and so on, had been wisely expended in an attempt at solving the transit problem of the West of Ireland, in all probability many of these trifling and somewhat extraordinary modes of spending their money would not be required.

The interesting islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark can best be visited from Cleggan, for which purpose a boat must be hired.

Letterfrack is a neat village of some tidy cottages, owing its origin to Mr. Ellis, a Quaker. The guardian, predominant feature of the place is the Diamond Hill (Bengob, 1,460 feet), which overshadows the hamlet. This is practically the sentinel watching the entrance to Kylemore Pass, which there begins.

This mountain has obviously acquired its popular name from its singular pyramidal, angular outlines. Mr. Ellis founded the place immediately after the Great Famine (1846-7), and even to this day the village stands out as unusual by reason of its neat houses and front gardens. There is a comfortable little unpretentious hotel (Casson's), which is also clean, where a day or so can well be passed.

The Christian Brothers' school for boys is well worth going over, and the head of it is always glad to shew visitors round the industrial workshops. There spotless cleanliness is inculcated, and, being combined with the learning of useful trades, the institution must exercise a most beneficial influence on the future of Ireland.

The Christian Brothers seem to have solved the

problem of co-ordination between primary and secondary schools in Ireland, and—a very important and—the State gives them no assistance.

Many more similarly well-managed and admirably-conducted schools are much needed throughout the country, but such a set of unselfish, devoted, and thorough men as the Christian Brothers is not easy to find. The boys under their care are most happy, and many of them play instruments in really a first-rate brass band.

An old writer who knew Letterfrack before the modern village was built by Mr. Ellis says: "Letterfrack, a few years ago, was a barren rock; it is now a crown of beauty. It was a region of haggard looks and walking skeletons; it is now animated by a well-looking, a well-fed, and a well-paid peasantry."

There are streams in the neighbourhood where free brown trout fishing can be had—salmon and white trout by permission.

At Letterfrack one road goes to Renvyle, and another, through the Pass of Kylemore, to Leenane.

After leaving Letterfrack the Leenane road follows a noisy bubbling stream and goes under avenues of trees, and then enters the Vale or Pass of Kylemore.

The large quite-palatial and fairy-like edifice was built by Mr. Mitchel Henry, and then it passed into the present proprietor's possession, the Duke of Manchester. Before that a Mr. Eastman had his house there. The valley contracts as one advances, the road following the banks of the outlet to Kylemore Lough, and then reaching the banks of the lough itself. This lough nearly fills

up the whole valley between the two parallel ranges of lofty and almost precipitous mountains not more than half-a-mile apart, and extending nearly three miles in length. As the mountain behind the castle is thickly covered with woods, the scene is both romantic and beautiful. Nowhere in Ireland can you find a castle, lake, mountains, and woods more artistically associated in forming a delightful picture. The miles of solid high fuchsia hedges, when in full red bloom on each side of the road, are perfectly startling and almost unreal in their beauty and novelty. In spring time, when the gorse is in full bloom, the drive is equally gorgeous in yellows.

Pursuing the road beyond Kylemore the sharp-angled juncture with the road from Recess is passed on the right, and some four miles further on, just opposite a small lake on the right, branches off the road to Salruck. Neglecting for the nonce this by-road, the main road straight ahead turns down to the south bank of the Great Killary, and so eventually to Leenane.

At Letterfrack is the juncture of roads, one going on to Leenane, as we have seen, that on the left going to Renvyle, Tully, and Salruck, and so to Leenane by a long round.

CHAPTER VII.

Renvyle, Connemara—Tully Lake—Mackerel Fishing—Renvyle Castle—"Straw Boys."

Renvyle House, County Galway, the old seat of the Blake family, is situated on a level ledge quite close to, and only a foot or two above, the sea at high-water—so close that a stone can be thrown therein from the shore end of the house.

> "Nor unnoticed pass
> The sycamore, capricious in attire,
> Now green, now tawny, ere autumn yet
> Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright,"

for it is through a long winding avenue of those fine trees that the house is approached. The nearest station to this particularly wild spot is Clifden, fourteen miles away, the drive from which is interesting, and, if the traveller be historically inclined, instructive as well. The route is through Letterfrack, the quaint Quaker settlement to which we have already referred. The drive from Letterfrack to Renvyle is six miles.

I had cause once to bless the Industrial School of the Christian Brothers at Letterfrack, for I had a serious break in the harness going down the steep hill leading from Letterfrack on the way to Clifden. The back-strap broke in half under the saddle (often a weak point

in harness, as it is invisible), and I had it mended by the boys in the boot-making and mending shop with precision, and quickly—no small consideration.

A fresh-water lake of considerable area is close to the Blakes' house, only separated from the sea by a few yards of land. It is unusual to find a lake and the sea such close neighbours. The lake contains brown trout in abundance, but they are difficult to catch, and anglers prefer the more substantial varieties to be obtained in Tully Lake, not far distant. There, at times, the sport is excellent.

Gulls, oyster-catchers, and small divers nest in some numbers on the small rocks in Tully Lake, and on the smaller island there is a heronry, which is an interesting sight.

The heron is always worth watching, particularly through opera-glasses. It is a silent, patient bird, of a strikingly melancholy deportment. The world is a sad, dismal, dreary world to the heron. It will stand absolutely motionless for many minutes, with its feet, or foot, in the cold water, and not move a plume. Its head will be well laid back between the shoulders. So long does it remain at the same place that it seems rooted to the soil.

The Blakes have the shooting over many miles of country, and it is of a good mixed kind. For example, an actual day's bag was eight snipe, two pheasants, one grouse, one rabbit, one curlew; another, eight snipe, six golden plover, one green plover; another gentleman's bag for the month of November was fifty-seven snipe, six pheasants, twelve woodcock.

The sea-fishing, at the doors almost, and round the

shores of Crump Island and Black-rock in the offing, is good, and consists of plaice, pollack, gurnet, whiting, bream, and an occasional white trout.

And the mackerel-fishing round these islets is splendid. Where there are plenty of the fish about the sport is most animated and exhilarating—the canoe in brisk and constant motion; the end of the rod anxiously watched; the sharp bending of the extremity, *seen* before even any tug is felt in the hands; the rapid wind-up of the reel; the raising of the rod to bring the line within hand-grasp; the sweeping swing-up of the fish over the gunwale, your neighbour probably going through the same process at the same time; then each out again as sharply as possible, not to lose the shoal, your left hand holding the rod, your right the reel-handle; and so on repeatedly, till the bottom of the canoe is a mass of resplendent, glittering, metallic silver, with brilliant flashes of scintillating blues and greens intermingled. The splendour of the living mackerel is indescribable, and he who only sees the fish dead has no idea of its beauty.

Mackerel-fishing is the most enjoyable sea-fishing I know of. And then it is occasionally varied by the dead, heavy plunge of a hooked gar-fish and the intense excitement and speculation as to whether it will be landed or not—probably not, the fish usually leaving our ken as it ceases to be water-borne, and just before the final "lift-up" over the gunwale. I have generally found in these waters that when mackerel are about the gar-fish is not far distant. The largest mackerel I have caught has been two and a half pounds in weight. These are by no means uncommon.

Mrs. C. J. Blake, during the long, dark period of the reign supreme of "No Rent Manifesto," was without any income, and, in order to pay off debts and to make it possible to repair the old house, most pluckily and praiseworthily took in paying guests in September 1883, an effort which would have been futile had it not been for the kindness of the "Blake Fund Committee" and those who so kindly subscribed thereto. The late Prime Minister, Mr. A. J. Balfour, was one of those who helped this committee. The influx of English tourists since then has been of great benefit to the neighbourhood, not only pecuniarily, but in the advantage derived from the sight of new faces and the interchange of ideas. The more English go to Ireland and the more they mix with and get to understand the Celtic nature, the better for both nations. Experience shews that when they mingle they coalesce.

And the old house of the Blakes was worth repairing. It is about as typical an old Irish house of the past as can be imagined. The outside is covered with curious old shingles, and the heavily barred windows eloquently tell of past troublous times. An entrance hall with ancient saddle brackets all round the lofty walls for fifty callers. Stabling suggestive only of a stud farm. Black panelled rooms of venerable antiquity. Long passages or galleries of bedrooms, countable only by the ten—passages where you get lost, and, wandering on, arrive, to your great astonishment, at the point whence you set out. Bedrooms up little, odd fragments of staircases. Bedrooms with quaint doors in them in unsuspected corners.

And then an old library, with books of certain and

uncertain date, like many things in the British Museum—not a place for the acquisitive book-lover to be left alone in.

A house to dream of the past in; of rollicking Irish hunting parties, surprise visits, and lavish hospitality and joviality; of rattling good stories told over the turf fire in the capacious dining-room; of ghosts upstairs; of fascinating Irish Dianas with unfathomable grey eyes,

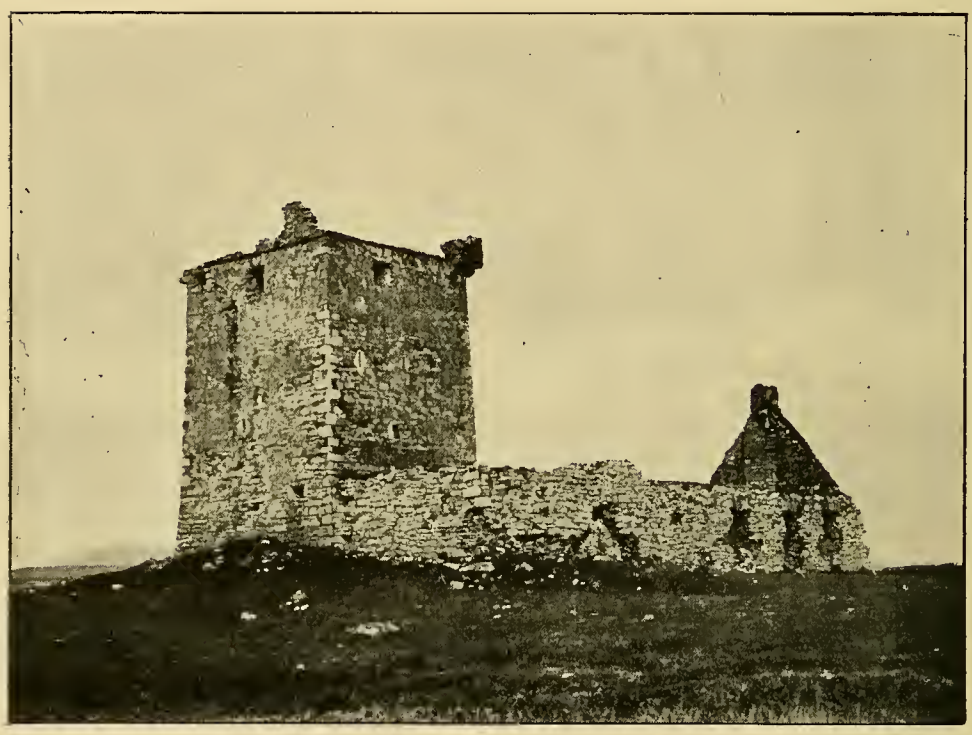


Renvyle House, co. Galway.

changeable in colour like the Connemara streams; of knightly squires and sprightly dames.

Will Ireland ever see those grand old times again? Let us hope so, even if they be less boisterous, more chastened, more mellowed. She has suffered so much in the past that surely a good time is coming. It looks like it.

Just about a mile and a half to the west of Renvyle House, a pleasant walk across the flat grassy land bordering on the sea, the ruins of Renvyle Castle form a prominent and picturesque object. The castle was built by the Joyces, and then passed into the hands of the O'Flaherties, and finally came into the possession of the Blakes, who are its present owners. It owes its destruction



Renvyle Castle, co. Galway.

to a woman, and that, too, a very remarkable woman. Grace O'Malley, the woman pirate of Achill and Clare Islands, stormed it and reduced it to ruins, after sacking it of all that was worth taking. Graine Ui Maille—to give her the Irish form of her name—had married Domhnallanchoguidh O'Flaherty of Ballynahinch, co. Galway, a gentleman who was "asured cousin in nine

degrees" to Sir Murrough ne doe O'Flaherty, recognized by Queen Elizabeth as head of the O'Flaherty clan. Naturally this distinction on the Queen's part was reciprocated on Sir Murrough's, who became the greatest supporter of the Saxon attempt at ruling that part of Ireland. It was only an attempt, and a weak one.

Grace favoured the Spanish pretensions, or at any rate hated the Saxon, and therefore she very naturally regarded Renvyle Castle as a menace, and so it came about that when she had accumulated a sufficient flotilla of curraghs and galleys, she swooped down from her northern island and pounded it with chain and other shot from the primitive cannon of those days, reducing it very much to the state it is now in. One of the curious chain shot used at the bombardment was found inside the ruin, and can be seen at Renvyle House. The watchful eye of Sir Murrough representing Queen Elizabeth's in those western seas, where Grace O'Malley's influence was paramount, was naturally disturbing to the lady with piratical proclivities; still, it was not till her husband, O'Flaherty, died that she took to a sea-rover's life, and wreaked vengeance on his cousin's stronghold. But the history of this extraordinary woman is so remarkable that we treat of it in a chapter to itself.

In the vicinity of Renvyle Castle are some very perfect Druidical remains. One is locally known as "The Giant's Grave," and is like the monuments of Stonehenge. Another is called "Desmond's Bed," and some suggest that this is of Scandinavian origin. In the midst of these monuments of a civilization so remote that we

know nothing almost about it is the chapel known as the "Church of the Seven Sisters."

The courtyard of Renvyle House and its outbuildings are remarkably large, and in former days were capable of housing any number of horses and cattle. The buildings now present a sadly dilapidated appearance.

The courtyard in front is embellished with two stiles, one over the sea boundary wall, and the other over what



Stile in front of Renvyle House, co. Galway.

is apparently a fragment of ruin of some ancient outbuilding or rampart. This latter stile leads to nowhere, Renvyle Lake lying on the other side of the wall, and there being no footpath in that direction. Still, if stiles be only picturesque, they need no apology for being.

"Renvyle Bay shore, where
O'er the rocks and up the bay
The long sea-r llers surge and sound,"



"Straw Boys" or "Moonlighters."

has been so often seen on the Academy walls as represented by Colin Hunter, A.R.A., Walter Bartlet, Sir Ernest Waterlow, R.A., and others, that it needs no further eulogy.

The terrible secret organization known as the "Straw Boys," or "Moonlighters," which terrorized whole districts of Ireland in the dark days before the passing of the Irish Land Acts is associated even to-day with gruesome, blood-curdling memories.

For years, in the course of my travels through the West of Ireland and during my sojourns there, I had endeavoured to come across outward or visible signs of their presence, but without success. At last, by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, I was able to take a photograph of two natives in the actual disguise used in those former troublous years.

How I managed and where I managed to take this photograph I am precluded from disclosing. Suffice it to say that I arranged my whole-plate camera to take any persons who should happen to stand on a certain spot at a certain time ; that in the daylight—certainly very early —two peasants in the real costume of the "Straw Boys" did stand momentarily on that spot, and I obtained their likeness, or rather the likeness of the costume they wore, for their identity was absolutely hidden by the disguise. The rapidity required in the proceeding prevented such a proper adjustment of the figures on the ground-glass as I could have wished. I had to make the best of the unique opportunity, and I did.

The costume is an absolute disguise, and consequently is an exceedingly clever one. The materials of the "make-

up" are obtainable in every cabin. The straw case for concealing the entire head is made of long straws from the fields tied loosely together, so that sufficient sight in any direction is obtainable by the wearer without removing it. In general appearance and construction it resembles the straw case used to protect wine bottles, but this affair is even larger than Jeroboam size, being about four feet high.

The stature of the wearer, the first point noticeable in establishing identity, is therefore completely obscured. I had not expected such tall figures, hence I failed to get into my picture the tops of the masks. The mask is tied firmly round the neck with twine, so as not to be easily blown or knocked off.

A plain white shirt is worn outside the clothing, while a woman's black skirt effectually conceals the legs. The figure or general contour of the wearer is therefore absolutely obliterated, and even the shape of his legs and the pattern of his trousers are concealed. The two I photographed wore sashes of gaudy ribbon when I took the photograph, but I rather fancy the shirt, when in action, would be tied round the waist with string or a straw band. The white shirt would be a guide on a dark night, enabling the men to see and follow one another.

The costume is so complete a disguise that the possible points for identification are therefore reduced to the hands and boots, neither of which would afford any practical clue, particularly when one considers the hurried nature of the "Straw Boys'" visit and its terrible import. The people visited would be much too alarmed to study hands and boots.

All things considered, the costume is about the most effective disguise that the brain of man could evolve. Each article of it is easily procured in even remote country districts, and after use each portion reverts to its usual position in the domestic economy of the cabin, while the head-dress can be burnt or pulled to pieces. The disguise is an example of the remarkable ingenuity which is a striking natural characteristic of the Irish Celt.

Those awful outrages to man and beast, which for so many sad, long years cast a deplorable gloom over certain parts of Ireland, are, it may be confidently and gladly said and hoped, gone for ever. The "Straw Boys" were an unholy terror of the worst description. The Inquisitors of old, the black robed and faced servitors who carried out unknown judges' awful sentences, could not have been worse. The sudden appearance on a moonless night of a body of disguised men demanding entrance to a lonely cabin on a desolate bog or solitary mountain-side, whose occupier had perhaps taken the place of an evicted tenant, is one of the most dreadful and pathetic pictures to imagine. No mercy was shewn, no compassion for the bread-winner, and we can now only hope that in all cases—as we know it to have been in many—the demoniacal spirit to butcher would never have overcome the inherently more humane and usual Irish feelings if excessive indulgence in drink had not temporarily obliterated all sparks of ordinary humanity in the perpetrators of the outrages.

The mere sight alone of these gruesomely clad and forbidding figures, mute, merciless, must have caused paralyzing terror. And then the awful sensation of

mystery—not knowing who they were, where they came from. They might be close neighbours. They might have come from a far distant place. The knowledge that you would never solve the riddle must have completed the feeling of sinking horror inspired by a visit from "Straw Boys." Like the Inquisitors of the Dark Ages they silently came, inflicted their dire revenge or effected their dread purpose, and as silently passed out again into the blackness of night and the unknown.

Let it not be thought because this account of the "Straw Boys" is given in this chapter that I obtained the photograph anywhere near Renvyle. I did not.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING AND CONNEMARA HOMESPUNS—LEENANE—DELPHI—LOUGHS FEE AND MUCK—WESTPORT—NEWPORT—MALLARANNY—RACES.

CONNEMARA homespuns have a future before them, and will shortly rival the similar productions of Donegal. Two causes are operating to explain this increased attention to the cabin-made fabrics of this delightfully romantic part of the West of Ireland. The cloth is being made more skilfully than formerly through all the many processes of its manufacture, and the visit of the King and Queen in July 1903 to Leenane, the centre of Connemara, on the Killary, and the marked interest their Majesties took in this peasant industry, sufficiently account for the fact that at the present time the demand for Connemara tweeds is more than the supply can keep pace with. However, more and more peasants are daily being taught the industry, so there is little doubt that it will not be long ere the supply equals the demand or at least is not far behind it.

At first the peasants in the neighbourhood of Leenane were most desultory in their efforts to spin the wool from their mountain sheep, and still more casual and careless when they attempted to weave it into cloth. Still, there had always been from remote periods the hereditary

instinct of the spinner and weaver in the district. The cabins were so dirty and ill-lighted that there was every excuse for the poor character of the material turned out. Windows were absent, or if present so small that many a weaver had to do his or her work, even in the brilliant far-famed Connemara light of day, with the aid of a candle. Such had been the custom from time immemorial. The women had to card and spin—picturesquely, no doubt—by the open door, otherwise fineness and regularity of thread would suffer. So their grandmothers had done before them. Cabins in this part of Ireland are dark recesses when the door is closed, and at night are the Noah-Ark-like resting places for miscellaneous collections of man, beast, and bird.

Endeavours are now being made, and with marked success, to persuade the peasants to build separate cabins for working in. This has taken time, for prejudices are strong in the Celtic nature, and a good deal of discreet and veiled management is required to get the home-born Irish peasant to improve his own position as regards cleanliness, and to realize that his success in life means departing somewhat from many ways of living which were good enough for his forefathers.

The Congested Districts Board for Ireland kept an instructor at Leenane for two years, in 1902 and 1903, to teach the peasants how to card, spin, and weave, and he not only invited them into his own room, but he also visited them at their cabins and personally corrected their mistakes on the spot and encouraged them. This judicious departure is most commendable, and is now bearing good fruit. For instance, before the visit of the Board's repre-

sentative the weavers only got threepence per yard for weaving; now they can easily get fourpence or more on account of the evenness and general quality of the fabric having improved in manufacture. Another excellent and practical help given by the Board is the grant of £7 10*s.* to each weaver who will build a separate cabin for the work. Weaving in the same room as that in which the family, etc., reside is prejudicial to health, so that from a sanitary point of view also this action of the Board is praiseworthy.

Mr. McKeown, of Leenane, is also doing good work in collecting money to put windows into cabins, so that the workers may have proper light and not be forced to use candles as heretofore. A window costs about 17*s.*, and I saw several cabins conspicuous with this excellent innovation. Another improvement—alas, not artistic—is the substitution of galvanized iron roofs for the old leaky sod or doubtfully thatched coverings.

The corrugated, bright, metal roofs, when new, look as if aware of their startling appearance, defiantly conscious of their general incongruity with the surroundings. When painted, as some are, with the peculiar red of non-corrosive paint, they only then weakly pretend a desire to harmonise with the Irish greens and yellows around. Their advent is necessary, perhaps, but regrettable. Our photographs of an old cabin and a new roofed one—each within twenty yards of one another—shew the change which is taking place. These particular cabins are within a mile or two of Leenane, on the Killary, near its finger-tip on the southern shore. The old cabin, with its quaint exterior and thatched roof, is typical of hundreds

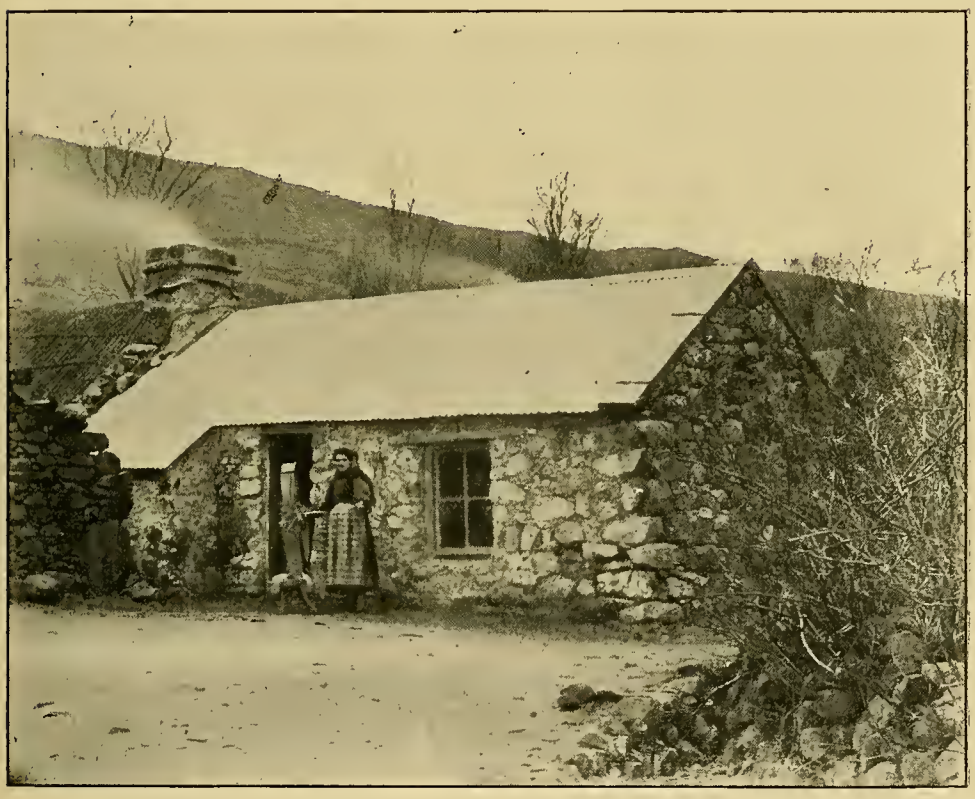
in this part of Ireland. In the particular cabin here depicted Mrs. Kerrigan lives and spins. A fair, shapely woman of middle-age is Mrs. Kerrigan, with clear-cut features, and eyes of brown, suggestive of the Connemara trout stream flowing within fifty yards of her abode into the Killary when the sun is playing upon it. Yes, as in other peasant women of Connemara, her eyes enforce attention and compel admiration.



The Hostess of the King and Queen and the chair His Majesty used. Leenane.

One day in July, 1903, a lady and gentleman walked into her cabin and had a comfortable chat with her for about half-an-hour. They came without announcement, quite unexpectedly, and delighted the heart of their hostess. They were the King and Queen. Upon the

occasion of our visit, on taking leave of Mrs. Kerrigan outside her cabin, she said to me, with an upward glance to the sky, and tears beginning to shew themselves, "I hope the Lord will come to me in Heaven just as he did, and take me by the hand as he did." And then she added, as an afterthought, in a subdued tone, as she looked questioningly at me with her clear brown eyes,



New-roofed (Corrugated Iron) Cabin and Spinning Wheel, Leenane.
Notice also the Modern Window.

"And sure he's next to the Lord, isn't he?" On such a startling question of precedence being put, and not being up in the intricacies of Heralds' College, I did not feel qualified to agree with her evident suggestion, or, on the other hand, to contradict her delightfully loyal thought,

so like a man, and weakly, I fear, I replied, "Well, for all we know it may be so." She shook us warmly by the hand and bobbed a curtsey in the naturally graceful Connemara style as she turned back into her cabin, and we, silently thoughtful upon the enormous power for good wielded by monarchs, humbly splashed through the mud to where our side-car stood at the commencement of her little mountain track.

The King, she told us, bought the entire piece of cloth she had on her hand-loom at the time of his visit, and the quiet grey pattern is known in the district by his name. She shewed, with evident pride, a hideous galvanized-clad and large-windowed cabin close by into which she was daily expecting to move her loom—and it may be mentioned that a local carpenter has learned how to make these hand-looms, in fact we saw him at work constructing one in a cabin at Leenane. Everything, therefore, connected with the industry will be Irish-made, from the wool on the sheep's back to the gown on the lady's.

A vast amount of patient, steady work is required in the industry. A forty-yard length of Connemara homespun, a little calculation shewed us, contains no less than thirty-six miles of thread, every inch of which passes at first through the facile fingers of the peasant women. An occasional blob of barbaric or Oriental appearance—thick splashes of wool some might call them—seems inevitable in the thread, and such a distinctive feature is it of the Connemara material that the German imitation, which has already arrived, has likewise imitation spots or thickenings, and also is—so thorough are the Germans—

fumigated with peat smoke. There is nothing like realism and minute attention to detail for successful fraud.

The dyes employed are extracted from lichens and herbs, which grow on stones by the shore and on the mountains, and once whilst at Leenane I saw a strip of a boy arrive with a big bag of mustard-yellow lichens which he had just collected. Altogether, already some two hundred and fifty peasants are engaged in one way or another in connection with the industry, and from my own personal observation they seemed most interested in the pursuit and keenly desirous of making a success of it. This number is sure to increase.

The dyeing and washing of the thread takes place under Mr. McKeown's supervision. He has obtained gigantic iron pots to boil the wool in, and tubs to wash the cloth in when dyed, and also drying-grounds to dry it in. Formerly each peasant used his or her own small iron pot, with the result that it was next to impossible to obtain any uniformity of colour in even a moderate length of cloth.

Boys tread the cloth barefooted in the tubs with water in order to wash and shrink it thoroughly, and we saw them actually so employed outside the shed where the dyeing processes are performed. Very reminiscent was the scene of the old-fashioned quaint wine-presses we have seen in use in the Canary Islands.

These homespuns, entirely made of wool, are particularly adapted for ladies' golfing, cycling, motoring, and general country dresses, as the material is light in weight and remarkably waterproof. Stylish hats can be made out of the same material as the gown with excellent

effect. As Norfolk jackets and knee breeches for men they are admirable, and are withal pleasing to look upon. The favourite colours are greys, but we saw some fine cloth in Post-Office-red, and some designs in large squares of black and white which almost would take two persons to shew off the pattern. The United States and London are the two principal markets to which the tweeds find their way.

Connemara is a land of strange delights, wondrous colouring, lights and shades of baffling intricacy, and an atmosphere redolent of repose. Its homespuns are in keeping with itself. They are suggestive of pleasant days, outdoor life, healthy exercise, rude acquaintance with wind and weather, a fair complexion, and an adaptability to circumstances which is perhaps the characteristic most essentially Irish. To use these homespuns is also to do a great deal of real good to the Irish peasantry, for you are helping them, in the best of ways, to help themselves.

The King, during his visit to Ireland, in one of his speeches alluded to the revival of Irish industries in which he said the Queen and himself had the fullest sympathy. He particularly mentioned the new spirit which is abroad in Ireland, and the intelligence, the deftness, and the fantastic taste of her people, which amply qualify the Irish to excel in such industries as this. His remarks are no mere flattery, for anyone knowing the peasantry recognizes how exactly true are the epithets the King used at Kilkenny. Were Ruskin alive he, too, would have thrown himself heart and soul into aiding the enterprise.



Bundorrha Pass, on the road to Delphi, co. Mayo. William Bald's Bridge in centre.

Two other cottage industries we would suggest for the Irish peasants—home-made carpets and hand-sewn gloves. Both products would find a ready sale in England and America.

An interesting excursion from Leenane, to those fond of fine wild scenery, is that to Bundorrha and Delphi. The shortest route is to cross over to the other side of the Killary by boat. Bundorrha is simply a quay with a few small cabins. The Leenane road joins the road up the glen a few hundred yards. The road then proceeds straight into the heart of the mountains on the right bank of a rapid stream, well stocked with trout and salmon. The gorge between the mountains is grand, with a wildness that is impressive. A bridge is then crossed, and the road continues behind charmingly-embosomed Delphi Lodge on the left bank till Doo Lough (black lake) is reached. This bridge bears an inscription that it was designed and built by William Bald, C.E., in 1823. In Dhulough House died (Aug. 10, 1897) the Bishop of Wakefield (Walsham How), who had only arrived about a fortnight before in search of rest and health.

The east of Delphi Pass is guarded by Bengorm (2303 feet), the west by the yet rougher and more rugged Benlugmore (2618 feet), whilst the glen is seemingly barred to the north by Glashearne (2474 feet) and Tievummera (2504 feet).

The road onward to Louisburg is not interesting in any way.

From Leenane the exquisitely beautiful Salruck district can be visited. One route is by water down the Great Killary to Rosroe, passing Dernasliggaun Lodge

on the left (three and a half miles) and Bundorrha on the right. The other route is a road one, taking the main route to Letterfrack and turning off up a side road, and passing Lough Fee and part of Lough Muck. This drive by the side of the lakes is very fine, the mountains on all sides lending an air of grandeur and wildness to the scene. The road to Salruck is then met with on the right hand, and at once begins a stiff ascent over the Pass of Salruck, before a sharp descent on the other side to sea-level again near the Pipe Cemetery. If, instead of going up this Salruck hill, the traveller continues his journey along the road by the side of Lake Muck, he will come to where the outlet river reaches the sea, and further on to Tully Lough, Renvyle, and so back to Letterfrack.

The hotel at Leenane is a great centre for all tourists in Connemara, as the long-cars start from there for Clifden on the one hand, and Westport to the north (eighteen miles) on the other. There is an abundance of bedrooms overlooking the Great Killary and the mountains on the other side, and the buildings includes a general shop, where you can buy anything from a needle to a bundle of hay, and also a post and telegraph office. The stabling is large and there is plenty of space for motors.

The eighteen-mile drive from Leenane to Westport passes Aasleagh Vicarage and church, but the route is uninteresting, and Westport also dull, of negative rather than positive features.

Dr. J. Johnston thus describes his first impressions of the town: "In Westport I observed symptoms of the national character—an itch for greatness amid nothing-



Leenane, on the Great Killary. Leenane Hotel is seen in the distance on the left. Shop for sale of Homespuns in foreground on the left.

ness." Even to-day this is true. There is a grand hotel, a wide avenue of trees, wharves and warehouses large enough for Dublin, and no business!

A steamer leaves Glasgow once a week for Sligo, and then it goes on to Westport one week and the next to Ballina. It is by these steamers that cattle are taken to Scotland from these parts of Ireland, and it is on them that the natives of Achill go over to Scotland and the north of England for the harvesting.

Croagh Patrick (2510 feet) is not quite ten miles from Westport, the ascent of which is not difficult. It is a particularly sacred mountain in Irish estimation. From the summit St. Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland. Its grand peak is one of the predominant, overpowering features of the district. I have seen it, with its little chapel on the top, even when fishing at the mouth of the Killaries. It is a great place for religious pilgrimage, and its sides and summit are regularly climbed at certain seasons by the devout, who "perform stations" at certain places as they ascend. From its summit a truly grand bird's-eye view is obtained of the coast line with its numerous frettings and guarding islands, and inland of its bogs and lakes. The pilgrim, on returning to his distant cabin in the wilds of Achill, on the main-land, acquires a certain amount of sanctity somewhat similar to that possessed by the wanderer on his return from Mecca.

The holy well on the way to Croagh Patrick has a history. St. Patrick being very tired after mounting the hill to bless Connemara and the Joyces' country, and, very thirsty, wished for a drink. Instantly, out sprang

the water from the holy well. When the saint was satisfied, however, it retired into its rocky recess. Many centuries afterwards a good priest, poking about the neighbourhood, took notice of a small stone with a cross upon it. This stone he raised, when out rushed the clear stream.

The train can be taken at Westport for Achill or Dublin.

From Westport, on the way to Achill Sound, the little port, Newport, at the mouth of Newport river, is passed. The place is of little account, and no interest of any kind that we know of to the traveller. The river, after a spate, is said to be good for fishing, but we doubt it, or we should have heard more in its favour. To the north-west of the town are the Burrishoole lakes—Furnace Lough and, above it, Lough Feeagh. Of these, Furnace is about three miles distant along the road leading to Achill. The latter fills the fine glen between Bengorm and Buckoogh.

About two miles from Newport and a short distance on the left of the Achill road are the ruins of Burrishoole Abbey, with considerable remains of the monastic church. These are of the fifteenth century. The church was cruciform, and the central tower is still standing. It was a Dominican foundation, and the antiquarian will find much to interest him there and to speculate upon.

Just north of it, beyond the adjoining creek, is the solitary tower Carrigahooley, "the rock of the fleet," which tradition assigns to Grace O'Malley (Graina Waile), the Pirate Queen of the West in the reign of Elizabeth.

In 1579 an expedition under Captain William Martin

was sent from Galway to punish her for her many acts of depredation and her determined and persevering hostility to the English. A body of troops under that gallant officer set sail from the port on March 8th, and eventually besieged the lady in her castle of Carrick-Uile, which is another name for it. But so impregnable was the stronghold, and so spirited the defence made by this extraordinary woman, that Captain Martin's force was obliged to retreat on the 26th of the same month, and very narrowly escaped being made prisoners. The names of the men sent on this occasion are entered in an old MS book which formerly belonged to Sir Edward Fitton, when it fell into the possession of James Hardiman, author of the *History of Galway*, but where it is now I know not.

The geologist will observe that on reaching Newport from Westport he has quitted the Carboniferous Limestone and entered on Upper Silurian rocks. This series is chiefly developed in the district extending westward from Lough Mask to the Atlantic, and occupies both sides of the trough from Erriff Bridge downwards to the mouth of the Killaries. In the neighbourhood of Newport it covers a considerable area to the east and south-east of the town, and, gradually narrowing, borders the Newport river past Lough Beltra, and then extends to the south-west shore of Lough Conn. Another narrow band stretches westward along the north of Clew Bay as far as Mallaranny. The headlands and islands are limestone, and the junction is well exposed in many places. Parallel with this Silurian band, and next north of it, is a band of Old Red sandstone, and the junction can be examined

conveniently near the foot of Furnace Lough, which is set in Old Red. The mountains around Lough Feeagh are of metamorphic rocks of Lower Silurian age.

Mallaranny, the next station to Newport on the way to Achill, is chiefly noticeable for the really good, comfortable, first-class hotel belonging to the railway company. It practically adjoins the station, a path leading directly from the platform into it. Opened in 1877, it has been practically doubled since in order to cope with the demands made upon it by visitors.

The grounds of the hotel cover some fifty acres, and are prettily wooded right down to the sea-shore below. The climate here is so mild that *Erica Mediterranea* grows and flourishes in the open all the year round. The situation is lovely—one hundred feet above the sea-level, on the southern slope of an isthmus commanding an unimpeded view over Clew Bay with its multitude of islands. The grand mountains of the Curraun promontory, immediately to the west, screen off the spot from the rude violence of the Atlantic gales. Through a hanging coppice of shaded paths access to the fine sanded beach below is gained.

On this firm, magnificent strand, at low water, horse-races are held in the autumn, at which function the inhabitants of the cabins far and near do congregate, a great contingent coming from Achill, for which island the event is one of the year's red-letter days.

The main road to the sands, where the races are held, is down through some steep fields and then across some stepping-stones, with rather wide intervals between them.

These homely Irish races are very different to the stiff and starchy races of England. There is no grand



Mallaranny Race-Course

stand, no well-kept course. Flags are stuck into the sand at intervals to guide the riders, and the public disperse themselves about where they like.

The place on race-day looks more like a fair. Booths are erected; roulette and *rouge et noir* tables, at which the usual stake is a penny, pursuing an undisturbed and busy game, are plentiful; apple and gingerbread stalls



The Stepping-Stones on the way to Mallaranny Race-Course.

are in evidence, and plenty of drinking tents for whisky and stout. It is not at all unusual to see a horse taken out of the shafts of the car which brought his master to the ground, and there and then entered and run in a race. I have seen this frequently done as the result of a bet or dispute as to rival merits of two animals. Once at Mal-

laranny I saw a dispute of this kind lead to two horses being entered. Both were at the fag-end of the field as it swept round the sands, but one of these two particular horses kept ahead of the other, and the rider pulled up occasionally, and sarcastically, to allow his competitor to come up level with him, when he spurted away, only to tauntingly repeat the same tactics, to the great yelling delight of the spectators, much more interested in this race, within a race, than in the real field.

The Irish are great sportsmen, and these unsophisticated races are their delight. Generally, too, foot and jumping contests are carried on as side shows, the entries for which are many and the competition most keen. There is no stint of applause or criticism, and now and then the freedom and personality of the remarks lead to a fight, which instantly becomes a memorable feature of the day. Sides are taken—clanship is still most prevalent—and if the Constabulary are not wary a real scrimmage may ensue. Those from one part naturally side with their representative, and blood soon flows.

It is surprising how many miles an Irishman will ride to attend the races of his neighbourhood—forty or even fifty miles is thought nothing of. I know no more amusing days than those I have spent on Irish race-courses. Some of the priests, too, I have seen just as keen as their flocks over the sport. No blame to them. They lead very lonely lives.

The races at Galway, on the grand breezy heights about three miles to the north-east of the town, are the only races comparable to those we are accustomed to in England. There a Grand Stand and enclosure and

properly-equipped bookmakers may be seen in all their glory surrounded by the usual crowd, but a crowd much more interesting than ever seen on the other side of the Channel. Gambling-tables, which are never allowed on English racecourses, are common objects. It seems that the law against these tables in Ireland is the same as in England, but the omission of being able to enforce any penalty for their use was omitted, so that no one interferes with them in this happy country!

The visitor to the West of Ireland should never miss an opportunity of attending the local races, if he wishes to see real Irishmen and women thoroughly enjoying themselves in their own native way.

CHAPTER IX.

Maam—A Faction Fight—"Patterns"—Recess—Emigration.

Maam Cross, the station next to Oughterard on the Galway to Clifden line, is so called, as to its latter half, from the cross roads just a little to the south of the station.

A road leading due north from the station goes to Maam Bridge, five miles away, over the Bealnabrack River. On the far, left bank of the river the road runs on the right to Cong, on the left to Leenane (nine miles), through Joyce's Country.

The first Joyce came to Ireland in the reign of Edward I., and from him are descended the Joyces of this district. Their country is fairly good agricultural land, on each side of the river running up from Maam Bridge to Leenane on the Great Killary. The tribe, or clan, is described by a former writer on Ireland (Mr. Inglis) as a magnificent race of men, the biggest, stoutest, and tallest in Ireland—to say that he must have known the whole of Ireland, which I doubt. I have frequently been through this district, and seen the men at work and at fairs, and never observed anything unusual in their size or appearance.

There is a very old, never-dying feud between the

Joyces and the Martins to this day—a kind of vendetta—as to the truth of which, I must admit, I was sceptical till the autumn of 1905, when I happened to witness a fearful fight between the two clans at Clonbur.

A drunken brawl between a Martin and a Joyce led to each calling upon the members of his faction to help. A *mêlée* ensued of a bloody description. A worthy old grey-headed priest rushed out of his house and tried to separate the combatants, but was, to my great astonishment, himself threatened with violence. The Constabulary were sent for. Meanwhile a huge Scotch sheep buyer who was attending the market threw down one of the ringleaders by means of a clever wrestling trick, and forcibly held him pinned to the ground. A woman then came up to him, as he practically sat upon the prone man, and, shaking her first at him with ominous intent, said, "D'ye mean to hit him?" thinking, I suppose, that he was a member of the other clan, and intended to finish off his opponent. Upon hearing that her friend on the ground was in no danger of murderous attack she instantly told the sheep buyer to "hold him tight—hold him tight," and not let him up "at all, at all" till the others had dispersed. The police then came up. I saw the Joyces lead off the field of battle one man whose face was terribly battered and bleeding. I have no doubt that on this occasion murder was very nearly being committed; the storm of passion and violence seemed to have made both men and women temporarily quite mad. It was a terrible sight never to be forgotten.

Maam Bridge consists of a few cottages and a little inn, facing the bridge, where one can put up. The

accommodation is indifferent, consisting of one sitting-room, from which two bedrooms are entered. It is an unsophisticated hostelry, looking singularly like a classical temple, and it is set in a garden of some of the finest specimens of ordinary herbs I have seen for some time. The front door, approached by seventeen stone steps, has, for door-posts, two square monoliths of hard sandstone. The somewhat unusual appearance of this little hotel is due to the fact that it was built by Nimmo,* the celebrated Scotch engineer, for his own convenience when he was building the bridge across the road. By the side of the house, built into the wall, is a curiously carved circular monolith of the same hard stone. It was evidently meant to take part in the construction of the bridge, but not being required was placed in its present position by the roadside to puzzle passers-by.

This spot, at the juncture of roads, is an ideal position for a first-class hotel, and I hope one will be built there, as the place is more in the centre of Connemara than almost any other. Interesting views and good fishing are all near, and it would be a grand place to stay at.

The view from the little inn is quite spoilt by the great staring Police Barracks on the other side of the bridge in the distance, on the right. The ugliness of this huge out-of-place building is not compensated for by the backing of a grand, bare, wild, deeply-seamed mountain. The incongruity of such a town-looking

* Alexander Nimmo was born in 1783 and died in 1832. He was the son of a watchmaker at Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire. In 1822 he was appointed engineer of the Western district of Ireland. During his life upwards of thirty piers or harbours were built under his direction on the Irish coast. He was a great authority in his day on bridges. He died at Dublin.



Maam Bridge.

edifice here, where wild nature predominates, is certainly remarkable.

This Maam mountain one sees in the far distance is dangerous. A young lady from Galway slipped there on June 30th, 1905, and fell a considerable distance, breaking her neck, and dying on the spot.

The river running in front of the hotel, beneath the picturesque bridge, into the arm of Lough Corrib is full of pike, which afford excellent sport, but as a natural sequence to their presence the trout fishing is poor.

I know not why, but above the temple-like façade of the hotel is carved "Ma'am Hotel," the division of the word *Maam*, thus deliberately done, being curious. The word is pronounced *Mawm*, and it means a pass or gap, a term also applied to the hollow of the hands. Across the bridge southward is *Maamwee*, "the yellow pass," and still further on, up the glen leading to the sea, *Maameen*, "the little pass." It was from here that St. Patrick, during his missionary tour, saw the desolate, barren, brown, southern region of Connemara—so different from the beautiful northern portion—and with some worldly wisdom, and with a view doubtless to his personal comfort, curtailed his stay to one night, saying, in the words of the local people, "I'll bless you any way, but sorra foot I'll ever put upon you." Here, upon the first Sunday in August, the celebrated "pattern" of Connemara is held in remembrance of the overthrow of the Irish pagan god by the patron saint.

These "patterns" are the great events in the rural life of Connemara. I have visited many of them, and found them chiefly associated with the buying and selling of

sheep, pigs, and a few cattle, and the usual concomitants of stalls for selling fairings and trashy articles, such as odd lengths of material for dresses, hats, and trousers for men. The pattern at Leenane is a great sheep fair, and so is the one at Clonbur, while the pattern at Achill, which is held in a field near the Sound, is distinctly primitive and much more interesting.

These functions are welcome breaks in the terrible monotony of isolation experienced by most of the natives of Connemara. If now and then drink overcomes them at a pattern, let not us who enjoy the great privileges of many pleasures and social intercourse be too censorious in our blame. Would we, I wonder, behave better, lived we under similar conditions? I trow many of us would not.

The Constabulary—that grand set of Irishmen of which any nation would be proud—act on these occasions with wonderful discretion and tact, and display great forbearance, under sometimes most trying circumstances. Anyone who runs down the Royal Irish Constabulary—and I am ashamed to say that they have been most maliciously maligned in England solely for the disgraceful purpose of political capital—is doing a cruel injustice to the most loyal and finest set of men under discipline this nation has, in my humble opinion, and I have seen them under very varying conditions and under very great provocation, and yet never saw them behave otherwise than in a true soldierly, and therefore gentlemanly, manner.

Driving home after a pattern requires constant care and a sharp look-out in the darkness. On one occasion,

when going home after the festivities late at night, my horse stopped dead and refused to budge. On getting off the car I found his head over the body of a man lying in the middle of the road and right across it, sleeping the dead sleep of the drunken. We just rolled the toper into the neighbouring dry ditch, and left him there in safety to sleep it off. Providence and horses are certainly kind to drunken folk

The dictionary so exactly describes Recess—a place of seclusion: for remission of business—that it is profitless to inquire if the name has any other origin. In the practical centre of Connemara this spot nestles, and smiles on the tourist, arriving, maybe, jaded with the roughness and nerve-irritating amenities derived from previous travels in England or in foreign lands.

Marvellously surprising is it that so many of our countrymen and countrywomen go abroad for change of air and scene and language when much nearer home exist all those concomitants of pleasure in probably far greater variety and perfection. France and Belgium certainly possess no scenery excelling that of Connemara in the same compass of earth surface; Norway may possibly equal it in some respects, say in savage grandeur, but then Gamle Norge never combines the exquisitely graduated tints of colouring of early morning and shadowy evening, as contrasted with the glaring light of day, which are characteristic of this part of Ireland. Some of the fiord-like intrusions of the Atlantic into Ireland's western shores now and again do suggest Norway; the island of Gomera in the Canaries is recalled at times when surrounded by Connemara's beauteous vestments of

green and flowers; a sudden flash of the Italian Riviera is spread over the recollection many a time when looking at the shores of a big lake scintillating in the glorious purity of Ireland's sunlight and blue sky. Yet it is subtly different to all these.

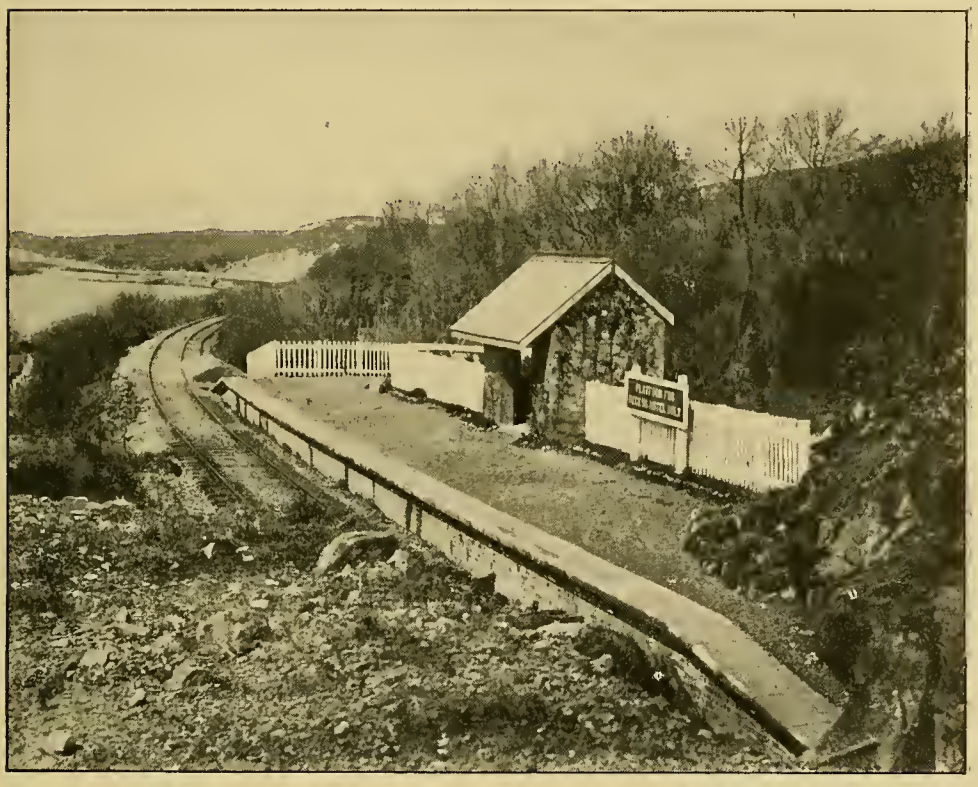
And Recess is one of the practical centres whence this charming part of Ireland may be conveniently visited and explored. The quickest route to reach Recess from London is from Euston Station by the Irish mail or North Wall to Dublin. The time *en route* is fifteen and a half hours—*i.e.*, leaving Euston at 8.45 p.m. by the Irish mail you arrive in Dublin early in the morning, and leave by the 7 a.m. mail to Galway from Broadstone Station, which train, by the way, has an excellent breakfast-car attached. Recess is reached at 12.15, and the train stops at the Hotel Platform, previous intimation having been given to the guard.

The pretty miniature railway station of Recess itself predisposes the traveller on arrival to like the place. It is, as the board announces, merely the arrival and departure platform for hotel visitors.

The hotel almost adjoins the platform, a road deeply shadowed with trees alone intervening. No other houses are near. It belongs to the railway company, and is undoubtedly comfortable and homelike, and the views of Lough Glendalough from the windows, seen in glimpses through leafy frames, are most attractive. The hotel is just at the head of the lough, which is a mile and a half long, and stands in a pleasant garden of shrubs, flower-beds, and greenest of green lawns, with ample trees around to afford shade. The house is modern, with large

rooms, and it has every comfort and convenience, including electric light made on the premises, and a dark room for photographers.

Every first-class hotel in these days should have a properly-equipped dark room, but many hotels even of quite modern construction are devoid of this attraction, even necessity, for travelling photographers.



The Hotel Platform, Recess.

It was here the King stayed for lunch when he visited the green marble Connemara quarry, which is close at hand. He was then attended by the most extraordinary and motley retinue which probably has ever accompanied him. A collection of Connemara boys—a boy means anything in trousers that distinct old age has not overtaken—

on foot and on Connemara ponies, wearing their rough homespuns and mud, just as they had arrived from far-off mountain and lake homes, took the horses out of his carriage, and drew and pushed him up the unkempt track leading to the quarry at the back of the hotel. Women and children, also on foot, scrambled after the *cortège* and lent variety to the scene.

The enthusiasm engendered by that quarry visit must have been great, for it has not yet died away, and in many a distant cabin, far away in the recesses of Connemara, the story of that great day is continually being told. In course of time it will probably crystallize into some delightfully naive legend of a great King, beautiful Queen, attendant giants, beneficent fairies, and mighty prowess on the part of all concerned. And if it does, who dare find fault with it?

The King here, as all over Ireland where he has been, has given a complete and most satisfactory answer to the late Lord Morris's pertinent question: "When will Englishmen learn that the Celt is to be won, not by institutions, laws, and abstractions, but by the magic of personal rule and kindliness?"

The marble, which is of several varieties, is mostly green, and used chiefly for jewellery and ornaments, but, technically, it is an ophicalcite, a mixture of limestone and serpentine.

The Connemara ponies, or Hobbies, some of whom played so important a part in that historic day's proceeding, are quite a feature of this part of Ireland. They are essentially Spanish in appearance and nature, and may possibly be direct descendants from Andalusian

horses which escaped in 1588 from the stranded ships of the Spanish Armada. They are justly famous for their strength, endurance, and easy paces, as well as for their almost canine intelligence and docility, and they possess the quality of being able to work under conditions which would simply kill horses reared under less natural conditions. A pony is bought when young for a small sum, and, without one, a peasant far away in the wilds would be helpless. He makes his own pack-saddle from four pieces of wood, and places a sack or mat beneath it to prevent galling, and then a cushion or pillion over the hind-quarters, and the animal affords him a comfortable seat. Ordinary ropes serve to form the rest of the harness. Creels are used for carrying seaweed up from the shore for manure and kelp-burning, for carrying potatoes or other produce, for turf from the bogs, or even pigs and hens to and from market or fair. To see a woman in bright red petticoat and blue cloak sitting on a pillion behind her man, or her creels, is very reminiscent of Italy, and it is a common sight in Connemara.

From the summit of Lissoughter, close to the hotel, only 1314 feet high, a really fine and extensive view of the surrounding country can be obtained, the great features of prominence being the Maamturk Mountains and the Twelve Pins. The latter are always with you in some aspect or other—you do not seem ever to get away from them, as they have a habit of turning up in the most unexpected places; they are the presiding genii of Recess. As the summit of Lissoughter can be reached in less than an hour from the hotel, it is an expedition well worth making.

A pleasant walk it is along the shore of Lake Glendalough before turning up to the Connemara quarry, after passing on the right the quaint cottage post and telegraph office, situated at the end of a pretty garden blooming with old-fashioned flowers in abundance. If that walk be prolonged straight on, Ballynahinch is soon reached, the centre for some of the best salmon and trout fishing in Ireland. It was there lived Grace O'Malley's (the female pirate) first husband, Domhnallanchogaidh O'Flaherty by name, when the spot was known as Bailenahinsi. But good fishing belonging to the railway company may also be had in lakes near the hotel at Recess, and which is free to the visitors staying there.

Ballynahinch can also be visited by taking the midday train from Recess to that place—five and a quarter miles. The scenery from the train on the right-hand side of Ballynahinch Station is exceedingly pretty.

Ballynahinch Lake is three miles long, and on an islet is the old castle of the sixteenth century, the former stronghold of the O'Flahertys, constructed out of materials taken from Toomboola Abbey.

Ballynahinch Castle, formerly the home of the Martins, is a large rambling mansion, since 1870 the property of the Berridge family.

It was not so very long ago that the Martins ruled all this part of Connemara in a patriarchal or even feudal manner. Old people now living remember the last of the Martins driving into Galway with a four-in-hand.

In 1833 Miss Maria Edgeworth travelled with a Sir Culling and Lady Smith as far as Ballynahinch Castle. "Through eighteen sloughs we went, or were got, at

the imminent peril of our lives. Why the carriage was not broken to pieces I cannot tell; but an excellent strong carriage it was, thank Heaven, and the builder, whoever he was." "It grew dark, and Sir Culling, very brave, was walking beside the carriage, so when we came to the next bad step he sank above his knees. How they dragged him out I could not see—and there were we



Taken from the window of the train at Ballynahinch Station.

in the carriage stuck fast in a slough, which we were told was the last but one before we reached Ballynahinch Castle. Suddenly my eyes were blessed with a twinkling light in the distance—a boy with a lantern. And when, breathless, he panted up to the side of the carriage and thrust up lantern and note (we still in the slough), how

glad I was to see him and it! and to hear him say, 'Then, Mr. Martin 's very unaasy about yees—so he is.'" They appealed for hospitality to Mr. Martin, having stuck fast for the twentieth time, and so finally reached the Castle of Ballynahinch.

Miss Edgeworth might well have exclaimed, in the words of Robert Burns:—

"I'm now arrived—thank to the Gods!—
Through pathways rough and muddy,—
A certain sign that makin' roads
Is no this people's study.

Altho' I'm no wi' Scripture crammed
I'm sure the Bible says
That heedless sinners shall be damned,
Unless they mend their ways."

That evening at the Castle they had a rare good dinner, which is thus described by Miss Edgeworth: "Such a dinner! London *bon vivants* might have blessed themselves! Venison, such as Sir Culling declared could not be found in England, except from one or two immense parks; salmon, lobsters, oysters, game; all well cooked and well served, and well placed upon the table. Nothing loaded; all in good taste. Wines, such as I was not worthy of, but Sir Culling knew how to praise them; champagnes, and all manners of French wines."

But much more interesting to Miss Edgeworth than the dinner was Mr. Martin's only daughter. "Miss Martin sat opposite to me, and, with the light of the branch candles full upon her, I saw that she was very young—about seventeen—very fair (with hair which might be called red by rivals and auburn by friends), her

eyes blue-grey, prominent, and like some picture I have seen by Leonardo da Vinci."

Lady Smith fell seriously ill at the Castle, so the party was forced to remain there for three weeks, during which time Miss Edgeworth received unbounded hospitality and kindness. Three times a week a "gossoon" ran with the post to Oughterard, where the nearest coach passed. "One runs for a day and a night, and then sleeps for a day and a night, while another takes his turn," Miss Edgeworth explained to her brother.

Miss Edgeworth makes some shrewd remarks upon the old-time, patriarchal way in which Mr. Martin lived—and she was evidently much impressed by the Leonardo da Vinci-like daughter of the West. "The astonishment of Sir Culling at Miss Martin's want of sympathy with his own really liberal and philanthropic views for Ireland, while she is full of her 'tail' of her father's fifty-miles-long avenue; also of Æschylus and Euripides, in which she is admirably well read. Do think of a girl of seventeen in the wilds of Connemara, intimately acquainted with all the beauties of Æschylus and Euripides, and having them as part of her daily thoughts!"

The poor Connemara "Princess" one day asked Miss Edgeworth: "Don't you think your friend Sir Walter Scott would have liked our people and country?" It was a pity Sir Walter never wrote romances upon the West of Ireland. Had he travelled there and imbibed the traditions and romances of that land, so fertile in stories, he most assuredly would have done so.

Eleven years after this visit of Miss Edgeworth came the great Famine, and Mary Letitia Martin, the "Con-

nemara Princess," lost parents, castle, retainers, property, everything—too proud to ask for a help, which would have been right joyfully given. She soon after left Ireland for ever, on board of an emigrant ship, having previously married a cousin, almost poorer than herself.

She died on November 7th, 1850—ten days after reaching New York—"and with her, it is hardly an exaggeration to say, that an entire type—a type of which, to those who had known her, she remained the most attractive embodiment—perished also." *

The grandfather of the "Princess" of Ballynahinch was known as "Humanity Martin." This Richard Martin was for many years M.P. for co. Galway, and widely known for his love of animals and duelling. He was a friend of George IV., and one of the founders of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In spite of much opposition from prominent men, such as Canning and Pitt, he was successful in getting passed the first Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (3 Geo. IV., cap. 71). His son, Thomas Barnewall Martin, the father of the "Connemara Princess," broke the entail, mortgaged his vast estates to the Law Life Assurance Society, and died on April 23rd, 1847, a poor man, of Famine fever, caught when visiting his tenants in the Clifden Workhouse. The Insurance Society soon took possession, and the estates—about 197,000 acres in extent—were sold under the Encumbered Estates Act for very inadequate prices.

* I am indebted for much of this account of the "Connemara Princess" to the life of Maria Edgeworth, by the Hon. Emily Lawless (Macmillan and Co., Ltd.).



Lough Inagh, near Recess. Some of the Pins of Connemara.

The "Princess" wrote one or two novels, the chief being *Julia Howard, a romance*, 1850—which gives something of her own experiences. This romance has not much attraction as a novel, but it is worth reading for the truthful description of the wild scenery of Connemara and the characters of the Irish peasants in her time. Miss Edgeworth's Irish stories might also, with advantage, be more read than they are at present.

Then, another excursion from Recess, on a car, unless you are a good walker, which should not be missed, is a visit to Lake Inagh. Lough Inagh is three miles long, and the entire journey to the end of it from Recess is a succession of views which irresistibly appeal to even the sense jaded with sublime scenery. The wild precipices of Bencorr (2336 feet) are appalling in grandeur, for they rise at once from the level to nearly all that height, the road being only seventy feet above sea-level. And then the Ben or Pin of Derryclare is a magnificent monster, overspanning the lake nearly all along its length.

Lough Inagh lies in solitary grandeur, enviously surrounded by wild and magnificent frowning mountains. Solitary, indeed, it is. There are no cabins, no people, no children, no happy signs of industry, of cultivation, prosperity. The roofless cabins and homesteads appeal sorrowfully to one's feelings. Was it necessary that all these inhabitants should have emigrated and gone to America? What a pity it was that the land of their birth could not sustain them. And yet, all through this west district of Ireland the sight of these roofless cabins and deserted farms is the singularly distressful feature. Occasionally you come across the remains of what must

have been even quite recently entire villages. No inhabitant. Stark, staring, undeniable evidence of the fact that the country of their birth, for some reason or other, could not, or would not, maintain its offspring. It is a terrible sight—the only discordant note in a land of beauty, where "the mountains kiss high heaven."

The effect of this excessive emigration upon the age constitution of the population is interesting. The result shortly is that Ireland is at the present day very much an island of old men and women. Out of every 1,000 of the population there are sixty-four men and sixty-three women of sixty-five years of age and upwards. In England and Wales the corresponding figures give the ages for men forty-two and women fifty-one; in Scotland the ages are forty-one and fifty-six; at the Cape, twenty-eight and thirty; in Canada, fifty-one for both sexes; in Newfoundland, forty-one and forty-three; in Queensland, twenty-nine and twenty-two. The remarkably high ages of the remnant of the Irish population is due, as we have said, to the bulk of the young and energetic men and women leaving the country. This drain of Ireland's best manhood and womanhood has amounted since 1851 to no less than 4,028,589—the best wealth the United States of America and some other foreign countries have ever had!

And yet emigration was once to be the panacea for all of Ireland's woes!

W. H. Maxwell, in his *Wild Sports of the West*, 1850, says that the last gleam of western prosperity was during the power of Napoleon, and with his dynasty it vanished. The terrible change from war to peace; the bursting of the banking bubbles, which supplied for that time an

imaginary capital; over-population and high rents—have ruined this wild district, and reduced its peasantry, with few exceptions, to abject wretchedness and want; and then he goes on to say that "the true cause of the misery of the western population is over-population and excessive rents, and before the peasantry could be tolerably comfortable, the lands must, on the average, be lowered at least *one-third*. Even then, at present prices, the occupant will be hardly able to manage to pay the rent and live."

Truly a remedy in one age may be a disease in another!

The journalists of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy are trying their utmost to stem the human tide flowing across the Atlantic, at present without avail. Nearly every cabin one enters in Connemara has a relation or friend in the States, and letters are continually arriving asking them to join them across the water. Many peasants I know are entering service just to be able to save enough money to pay the passage money. The familiarity in out-of-the-world Connemara with the names of the cities in the United States is surprising. A never-failing topic of intense interest to the peasants is to talk about the doings and events of the great Republic. They will listen to you for the hour together and ask innumerable questions. American journals sent by their friends are eagerly hailed and read right through from beginning to end.

CHAPTER X.

Galway—The Claddagh—The Salmon Fishing—Eels—Lampreys.

The observant traveller cannot help being struck in Galway, as he will be more or less all over the south and west of Ireland, at the importance and altogether out-of-proportion magnificence of the Government buildings for the improvement and wants of the country. The Government in Ireland seems to occupy the place filled in England by the public and by public and private companies. Most of these public buildings over this part of the island are already too large for the decreased and very rapidly decreasing populations. The workhouses are many of them empty, or nearly so. The prisons are now also far too large for the requirements. If the population continues to diminish at anything like the same rate one half of such palatial edifices will not be required.

Two fine bridges cross different portions of the Corrib river. There is a handsome building around a quadrangle—Queen's College. A palatial Court-house (with the funny warning on it—"Post no Bills—Play no Ball"), two prisons—a county and a town. The Exchange, near the church of St. Nicholas, is an open corridor 90 feet long by 28 broad, with a front of arches supporting an upper storey, wherein are apartments for public purposes.

St. Nicholas' Church is worth visiting. It is cruciform, 152 feet long and 126 broad, with a steeple arising over the nave. Then there is St. Augustine's Church (Roman Catholic), erected in 1859. The town also contains an Infirmary, a fever hospital, and no less than five nunneries. There is a grammar school in the near vicinity. Galway may once have needed all this public accommodation. She does not now.

In spite of all these and other fine public buildings, Galway bears upon its face a readable proclámation of having seen better days. It is dirty, unkempt, badly paved, most indifferently lighted, and the houses dilapidated and depressing.

Vacant warehouses and dwelling-houses—I saw rows, regular streets of them—seem more in number than the occupied. The whole town has a depressing effect. A sad, large Ichabod is written in capitals on Galway. Signs of past grandeur are startlingly present in what are now wretchedly poor, slummy streets. Grand old houses with carved mantelpieces in them probably worth more than the fabrics containing them; fine old wide staircases of hard wood and carved banisters proclaim a very different past.

In its long-lost palmy days Galway had extensive trade connections with France and Spain, and the tourist in the town to-day is constantly coming across carved coats of arms above doorways, elaborate windows, and stately doorways, even *patios*, very reminiscent of those countries.

The inhabitants, too, are always reminding him of Spain in the colouring of the people, in the way the women wear their shawls, and in their upright, stately deport-

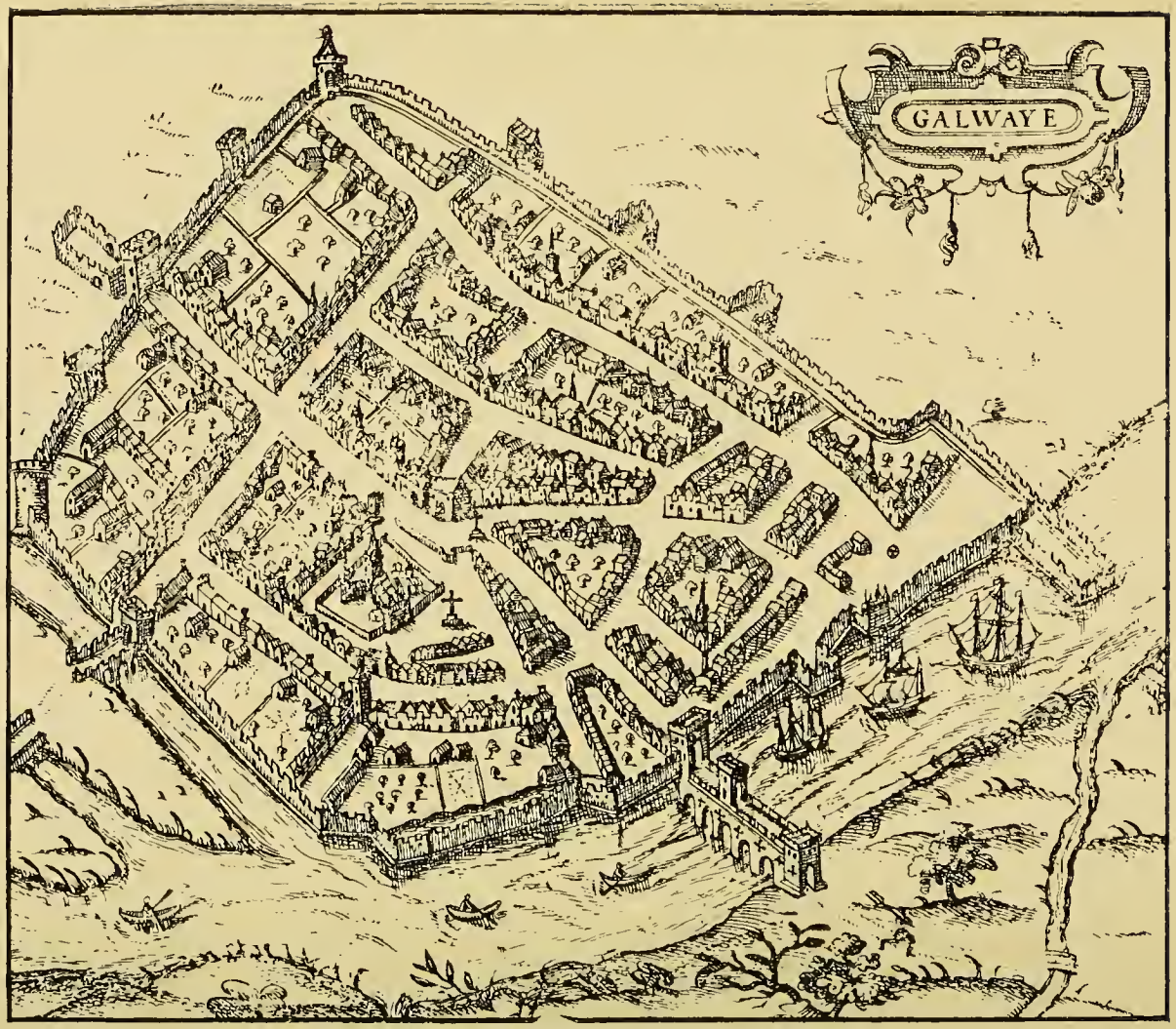
ment. A good deal of Spanish blood has clearly here been mixed with the Galway.

Little is really known of the history until after the arrival of the English. At that time the place was under the despotic sway of O'Flaherty.

The territory on which the town stands, as now the town itself, owes its name to its commercial renown, which spread all over Europe—*Clanfirgail*, the land or habitation of the *Gail* or merchants. Alas! now it is no longer a town of merchant princes or of any princes at all. Yet it is most advantageously situated for trade, particularly with America. The Bay is by far the most spacious and secure of any on the West coast, and it seems to extend its ample arms to invite the commerce of the world to come within its ample embrace. Some day, when Ireland is connected by tunnel with England, as no doubt eventually it will be, Galway may arise from its present deplorable position, and create another heir as great in admiration as, or greater than, its old days of splendour.

The distance between Larne and Stranraer is in these days of the Simplon tunnel nothing to our great engineers, and the construction of this essential to both islands is imperatively needed. The more the threads of intercommunication, the firmer the bond of union. Let us avoid one war only, and build this tunnel! The cost of each will be about the same; the benefit of the latter insuperably greater.

In the year 1610, John Speed, the celebrated English antiquary, visited Galway, and his description of the place sufficiently indicates its then importance: "The principal city of this province, and that which may worthily be



Facsimile of Speed's Map of Galway, 1610.

accounted the third in Ireland, is Galway—in Irish, *Gallive*—built in manner much like to a town. It is dignified with a Bishop's See, and is much frequented by merchants; by reason whereof, and the benefit of the road and haven, it is gainful to the inhabitants, through traffick and exchange of rich commodities both by sea and land." As I happen to possess a copy of Speed's map of the province of Connaught, in a corner of which is a quaint engraving of the city of Glasgow, I reproduce it here in *facsimile*. This plan of the city is probably correct, as Speed had a draughtsman fetched from Dublin whilst he was in Galway to make it under his supervision. But his delineation of the Western shores* is probably drawn from hearsay or secondary evidence, as we do not know that Speed ever went there, and is only now valuable as shewing what was known in Galway in 1610 by hearsay and report of Connemara. To Galway, Connemara was a far-off county, and undoubtedly dangerous to be visited by strangers.

On the back of Speed's map of "The Province of Connaught" are two columns of descriptive matter, nine lines only being devoted to the "Citie of Galwaye," but the Isles of Aran absorb thirteen, and as they are good reading I quote them. They are instructive: "Not far from which" (Galway), "near the West shoar that lies indented with small inlets and out-lets, in a row, are the Islands called *Arran*, of which many a foolish fable goes, as if they were the Islands of the living, wherein none died at any time, or were subject to mortality; which is as superstitious an observation as that used in some other

* Reproduced on page 5.

corners of the Country, where the people leave the right arms of their Infants males unchristened (as they term it) to the end that at any time afterwards, they may give a more deadly and ungracious blow when they strike: which things do not only shew how palpably they are carried away by traditious obscurities, but do also intimate how full their hearts be of inveterate revenge."

From which, O worthy Speed, we moderns gather two facts: That the Isles of Aran were a *terra incognita* in your day (1610), and the reputation of the inhabitants of them, if they had any, was a warlike one.

It will be noticed that in Speed's day those islands lying at the entrance to Galway Bay were spelt with two r's—"Arran." But the spelling of all Irish names is in a chaotic state, and more than the usual poetic licence seems to have been taken with them by writers of all ages. The Ordnance maps of Ireland, for example, spell many names unrecognisable by the inhabitants of the respective places.

Several curious rules and bye-laws of the old corporation of Galway prohibiting all intercourse with the natives are yet preserved. Needless to say they are now inoperative.

In 1518 it was enacted that none of the inhabitants should admit any of the Burkes, M'Williams, Kellys or any other sept into their homes—"that neither O ne Mac shoulde strutte ne swagger through the streetes of Gallway;" and this singular—piously meant, no doubt—inscription was formerly to be seen over the west gate:—

"From the ferocious O'Flahertys
Good Lord deliver us."

Of its old strength as a fortified, completely-walled town there are few remains, but a piece of the old wall can be observed on the way to the Court House.

The situation, too, of the place is flat and uninteresting. The only things worth seeing in it are the salmon in the river, and the Claddagh—the maritime ancient suburb of Galway.



Copyright.] [*W. E. Ward.*

Part of Old Wall, called "The Spanish Arch," Galway.

But then Galway can boast of one asset—it is the Gate of Connemara.

The Claddagh district of Galway consists almost entirely of small cottages or cabins in rows not unpicturesque in appearance, but very low in stature and dark and smoky inside. The Claddaghites are nearly all fishers, and Roman

Catholics. They have traditionally acquired special usages and habits which they to this day jealously guard and maintain. They have in practice their own local government with their own mayor or king. They intermarry among themselves, and consequently are all related to one



The Claddagh, Galway.

another. Their notions of hospitality to strangers venturing within their domains are peculiar. If a stranger should insult a Claddaghite ever so much within the Claddagh precincts the etiquette is that it must be borne with wonderful silent Christian calmness and brotherly

forbearance. The offender is carefully guarded outside the sacred boundary, and then—well, the stranger had best quit that part quickly. The vengeance and retaliation will be enacted with compound interest for the delay. It is only within quite recent years that the King's Writ had any potentiality in the Claddagh.

The Claddagh women possess unlimited control over their husbands, the produce of whose labours they exclusively manage, but with sound worldly wisdom, allowing the men little more money than suffices to keep their boots in repair, but they have the policy at the same time to keep them plentifully supplied with their usual luxuries, whisky, brandy, and tobacco, of which they themselves liberally partake.

They have many peculiar customs. The wedding-ring is an heirloom in a family. It is regularly transferred by the mother to her first married daughter, and so on to their descendants. These rings are large, of solid gold. They are formed into the shape of two hands, a heart being placed between them. The Galway jewellers sell imitations of these rings as souvenirs of the place.

Just outside the bounds of the Claddagh is a wide expanse of road where the turf market is held. The characteristic Galway carts with long shafts fore and aft come in laden high with the national fuel from the neighbouring bogs, remaining here till the contents are disposed of.

Ireland's supply of turf is practically exhaustless, and the lowest estimates indicate that there is enough on the island for all demands which may be made upon the supply

for centuries to come. The centre of Ireland is one huge bog alone. This is comforting news for those fond of good fires.

If you should happen to be in Galway when the fish market is on go and see it. It reminds one very much of the similar function at Bergen in Norway.

The salmon fishing place of Galway is certainly a



Turf Market, near the Claddagh, Galway.

sight worth seeing; there is nothing like it that I know of on this side of the Atlantic. It lies in almost the centre of the town, and is a most circumscribed spot, merely about one hundred yards of the river Corrib, from the wide gravelled shrubless right bank of which the fishing



The Fish Market, Galway.

is pursued. The river flows over weirs, and the fish lie below it and wait to get up to Lough Corrib above.

The fishery is privately owned by Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, who lives in the house just below the bridge bordering on the river.

The Galway Several Fishery, which extends over the River Corrib, flowing from Lough Corrib to the sea, has an ancient history. It was granted in the seventeenth year of King John, along with the "entire land of Connaught," to one Richard de Burgo. It was re-granted again by Henry III. In the reign of Henry VIII. and Charles II. there were also royal grants to other families of note, this and other fisheries having devolved and fallen to the King "by the delinquency and forfeiture, attainder, or rebellion of the several proprietors thereof."

The Letters Patent granted by Charles II. give the exclusive right of salmon fishing, pike, eel, and other fishing, together with the fish, house, reservoir, plot of ground and small island, garden, new weirs and cribs, and all other engines for the taking and catching of fish being in the Galway river, etc.

In 1852 the Galway Several Fishery was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court, and thus came into the possession of the family of the present owner.

One interesting point in the old grants is that the eel fishery was evidently much valued, and is specially referred to in the grants along with the salmon. At the present time the "silver eel" of this fishery is much valued in the London market, as are all the silver eels from Irish rivers. The habits of the "silver eel" are just the reverse of the salmon. The eel migrates to the sea to

breed and goes up to the lake to grow, whereas the salmon goes to the upper waters to breed, and migrates to the sea in order to increase in size.

The catch of salmon and grilse on the Galway River has always been remarkable as compared with that on any similar piece of water in the United Kingdom. The spring run culminates in April, the summer in June. The spring salmon, though fewer in number, are the finer fish, and the water can usually be depended on for good sport.

The summer and autumn run consists chiefly of grilse, but with many salmon intermixed, and, with a fair supply of water, the numbers caught are always large.

During the last twenty-five years the average catch of salmon by anglers has exceeded a thousand fish. Catches of twenty, and in some cases as many as twenty-five, by one rod in one day have been recorded, whilst catches of from seven to ten in the height of the season are frequent.

The heaviest fish caught during the last five years have been 32, 42½, 30½, 27½, and 36 lbs. respectively. The grilse weights on an average are between 6lbs. and 7lbs., and salmon between 13lbs. and 14lbs.*

* I give a few of the Rules of Angling of the Fishery, which may interest the general reader as well as the angler :—

NUMBER OF RODS.

1. The number of rods on the river, in addition to one rod reserved by the owner, shall be limited to seven, provided they are all taken by anglers for the whole season. If, however, they are not all taken by anglers for the season, then when the river is in more than average good order, as tested by height of water and catch of fish, the Fishery shall have the right of putting on other rods at its discretion up to the old club limit of nine.†

In this rule two consecutive half-season rods, whether single or joint, shall be counted as one rod for the whole season.

† No extra rods were put on in 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, and 1905.

When the water is low in the river, as it was in 1905, the fish can be distinctly seen. They lie in large grey clumps like masses of seaweed, the contours of the masses being clearly defined against the gravel-rim bottom. A visitor looked over the bridge at the strange sight, and said to me: "How odd the river looks with grey patches all over it." I replied: "Look closer." He did. The result was a jump, and "I declare they are fish!" So they were, hundreds of them, from two or three pounds up to twenty pounds and larger, all quietly waiting below the

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TERMS FOR EACH ROD.

2. (*a*) By whole and half season—

During whole season of eight months from February 1st to September 30th inclusive	60 guineas
During winter and spring season of four months from February 1st to May 31st inclusive ..	30 „
During summer and autumn season of four months from June 1st to September 30th inclusive ..	40 „
Joint or partnership rod for two anglers during whole season	70 „
Joint or partnership rod for two anglers during winter and spring season	35 „
Joint or partnership rod for two anglers during summer and autumn season	45 „

The joint rod carries the right of consecutive use by its holders and their transferees.

Thus two anglers, or members of their families, can use the joint rod for alternate days, weeks, months, or any combination of these times, according to mutual arrangement.

(*b*) By day—

During February	£0 10 0
From March 1st to May 31st	0 15 0
From June 1st to July 15th	1 0 0
From July 16th to September 30th	0 15 0

The angling week extends from Monday to Saturday inclusive.

18. No wading shall be allowed when the water is below a given mark.

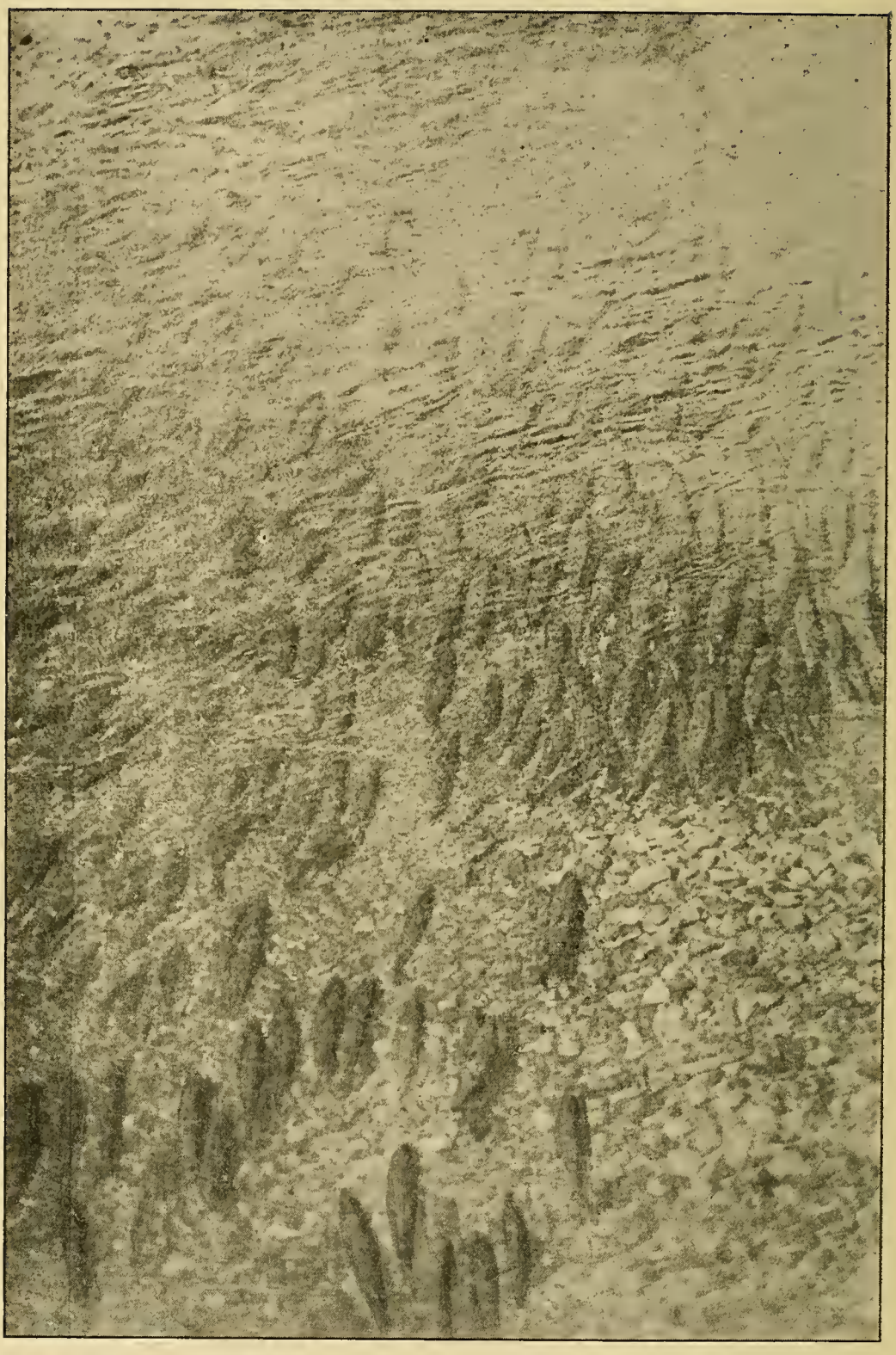
surface of the water side by side, like soldiers at company drill, with noses pointed up stream, bodies perfectly still, tails slightly moving from side to side with a pendulum regularity. Only *very* occasionally would a fish jump up and make a splash. Their whole undivided attention seemed to be concentrated upon higher things than flies, namely, how quickest to get up the river. An admirable example of steadily sticking to business. We counted salmon within sight of the bridge up to 500 in September, 1905—a very dry season—and then left off. Lake Corrib ought to abound with salmon, but it does not. Pike are there, too, in numbers! On this occasion when we actually counted the salmon two gentlemen were fly-fishing from the path. They did not get a rise all day! A big ladle would have been better!

As people are I know sceptical about fish stories—and rightly so—I held my camera over the parapet of the bridge, lens pointed downwards to the river below, and endeavoured to obtain a photograph of the salmon *in situ*.

SALMON CAUGHT.

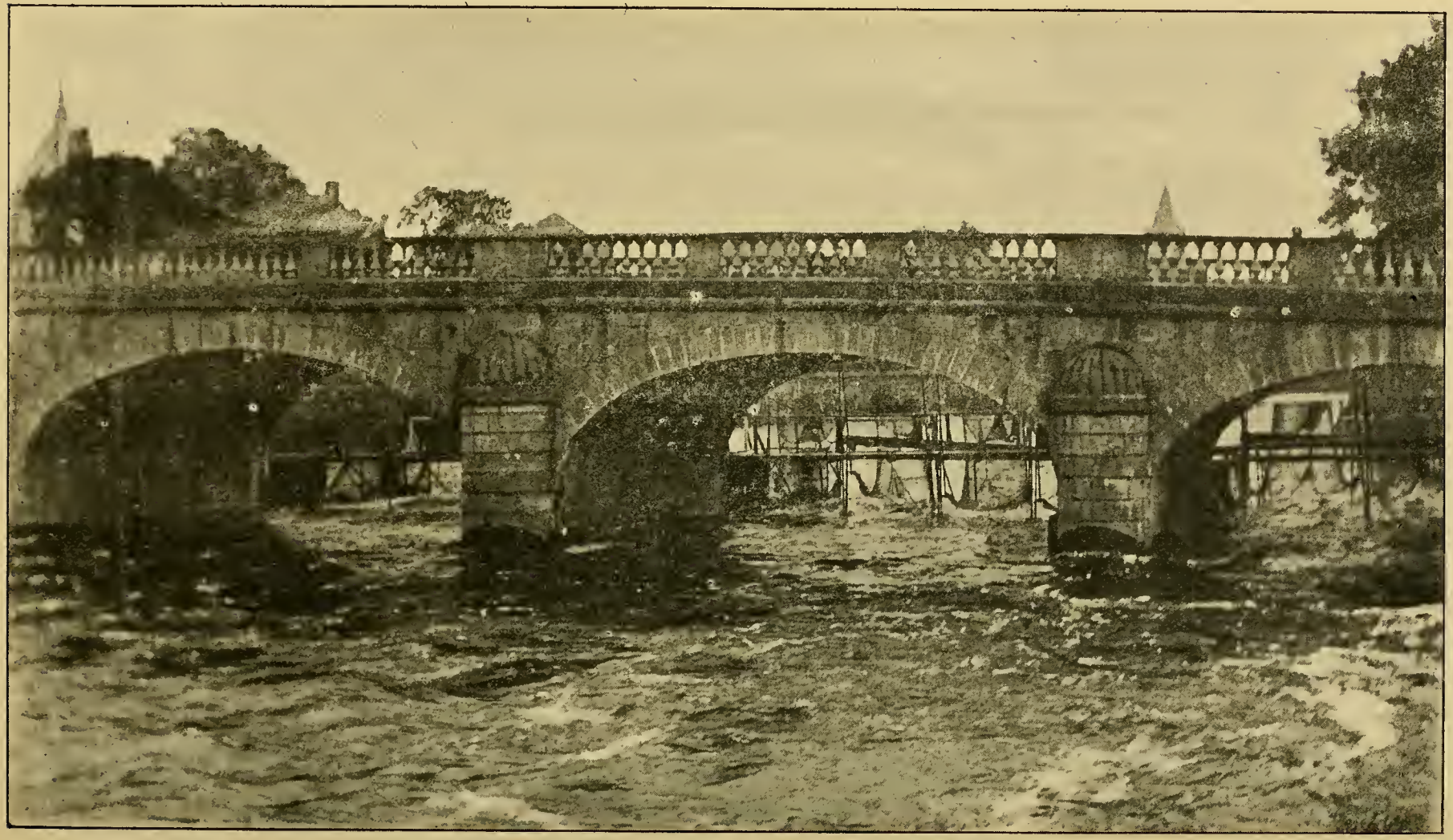
21. All salmon caught shall be sent at once to the Fish House and weighed according to office rules. The angler on whose rod the fish are caught shall have the right to one-third of the weight, and two-thirds shall belong to the Fishery. Anglers shall have the option of taking home for use or of sending from Galway their share of the fish, or of disposing of it to the Fishery at the net wholesale market price of the day, which price shall be shewn at the office. In this last case the value shall be credited to the angler's account. Any angler's account, on receipt of a day's notice by the office clerk, shall be made out and settled.

In order to avoid the necessity of accounts, a season, half-season, or monthly angler may, if he chooses, take away every third fish caught, beginning with the second. The Fishery, in like manner, may require this condition to be observed. For purposes of record every fish must be brought to the office to be weighed, and no fish, whether salmon or trout, shall be sold in Galway and its neighbourhood.



Copyright.] [*W. E. Ward.*

Salmon in a small portion of Corrib River, Galway. Taken from Bridge by holding Camera with Lens pointed downward to river.



Copyright.]

[*W. E. Ward.*

The Bridge at Galway, shewing the Nets for trapping Salmon and Eels. The photograph of the Salmon was taken from the right-hand end of the Bridge.

But the light was just then not right, and my photograph was not so good as that taken by my friend Mr. Edmeades Ward. He has kindly allowed me to reproduce the photograph he took, which shews merely a small area of the river-bed beneath the bridge. But it is sufficient to indicate how plentiful the salmon are. The gravel bed at the bottom of the river is shewn in this photograph at the spot generally frequented by lampreys.

Below the bridge, on the side away from the salmon ground, are some large square deal boxes where the eels are kept till they are required for the market. The nets for catching them are also used on that side of the bridge and for lampreys. A large number of eels run *down* the river from the huge lakes above, and are caught in these traps and diverted into these receptacles.

Besides eels, another branch of this very remunerative fishery is that of lampreys, which frequent the river Corrib.

Henry I. is said to have died from an illness brought on by eating this fish contrary to his physician's orders. But it should be said in fairness to the lampreys that he was, before indulging in his favourite dish, in a low state of health, the agitation of his family quarrels having much upset him. This fatal dish he took in the forest of Lyons, when he had been hunting.

The river-lamprey, or lampern (*Petromyzontidæ fluviatilis*), enters rivers to spawn in the spring. They are long, eel-like in shape, with scaleless bodies, terminating in a circular suctorial mouth. Behind the head is a row of seven bronchial openings through which water is taken in to the gills for breathing purposes. By means of their

mouth they attach themselves to stones and other fish in order to obtain a resting-place. When attached to fish they suck their nourishment from their hosts; they are therefore true animal parasites.

The inner surface of the cup-shaped mouth is armed with sharp-pointed teeth, with which they perforate the skin of the fish they attack preparatory to sucking their host's blood.

The town of Galway first figures in authentic records as a fort of the Connaughtmen, 1124. About 1245 it was taken by Walter de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, and its rise as a town may be dated thereabouts. Many English families, or perhaps they had better be called Anglo-Norman, settled here, whose names, or most of them, are still found in the town: Athy, Blake, Bodkin, Browne, D'Arcy, Ffont, Ffrench, Joyce, Kirwan, Lynch, Martin, Morris, Skerrett. It was to these clannish families that the Cromwellians gave the name "the tribes," so that Galway became known as the City of the Tribes.

Lynch's mansion is one of the show places. This is the finest example here of a merchant prince's house of the past. The arms of the Lynch family are carved upon it—a monkey and a child. The legend runs that when the house was once on fire a monkey saved the child. The Lynch family furnished the first mayor of Galway under the charter of 1484, and after that no less than eighty-four members of the same family held the office. In the Church of St. Nicholas is buried the "Spartan Lynch," as he is called. He actually was such a monster as to condemn and execute his own son. Young Lynch had killed a Spaniard, the son of a merchant who had

entertained the father-mayor when in Spain. Jealousy, or a desire to remove a witness to his wrong-doing, was the motive for the crime. After his condemnation, the convict's mother invoked the citizens of Galway to save her son. The usual place of execution being therefore not available through the hostility of the populace, the mayor carried out the dread sentence of the law from the prison window. Such is the gruesome tale. The spot has a memorial upon it to the memory of "the stern and unbending justice of the chief magistrate of this city, James Lynch Fitzstephen, elected Mayor A.D. 1493, who condemned and executed his own guilty son Walter on this spot."

Public announcements are still given out in Galway by a man going through the town ringing a bell at the street corners. I was there once when something had gone wrong with the waterworks, and I heard this bell ringing and a stentorian voice shouting out: "Water will be cut off from 12 to 6."

From Galway, a small steamer, the *Duras*, plies to Ballyvaughan, across Galway Bay, during the summer months, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the passage taking one hour and a-half. At Ballyvaughan, long-cars await the steamer and convey the passengers to Lisdoonvarna. From Ballyvaughan a car can also be taken to New Quay, a few miles only distant. It is on the road from Ballyvaughan to New Quay, just before coming to the Roman Catholic church, up a path, over the hill on the right, that Corcomroe Abbey is passed, concerning which interesting ruin we say more in the chapter on New Quay, Co. Clare.

CHAPTER XI.

Cong—The Underground River—Clonbur—Doon—Pike.

A startlingly sudden mixture of the true mediæval and shoddy modern. The wisdom of the Ancients, of pious men of deep learning and refined culture, cheek by jowl with a glaring example of the blatant folly and incapacity of the nineteenth century. Perhaps in this twentieth we should have been wiser—I know not. I rather doubt our increased wisdom. A cunningly-placed Abbey, superbly proportioned and richly carved—for so it must once have been before it was ruined—in an entrancingly lovely position on the narrow strip of land separating two of Ireland's largest sheets of fresh water. A simple Irish village of small cottages, and an old, very old, Celtic cross at the spot where the two roads meet. An inn, calling itself an hotel, whose prominent feature is the not unusual back-yard, where local celebrities and the occasional visitors meet to have a "crack" and discuss wonderful catches of trout and pike, in the strange society of mud, pigs, fowls, horses, and smells.

Such is the Cong of to-day as it appears at first sight. But it is not all of Cong by any means.

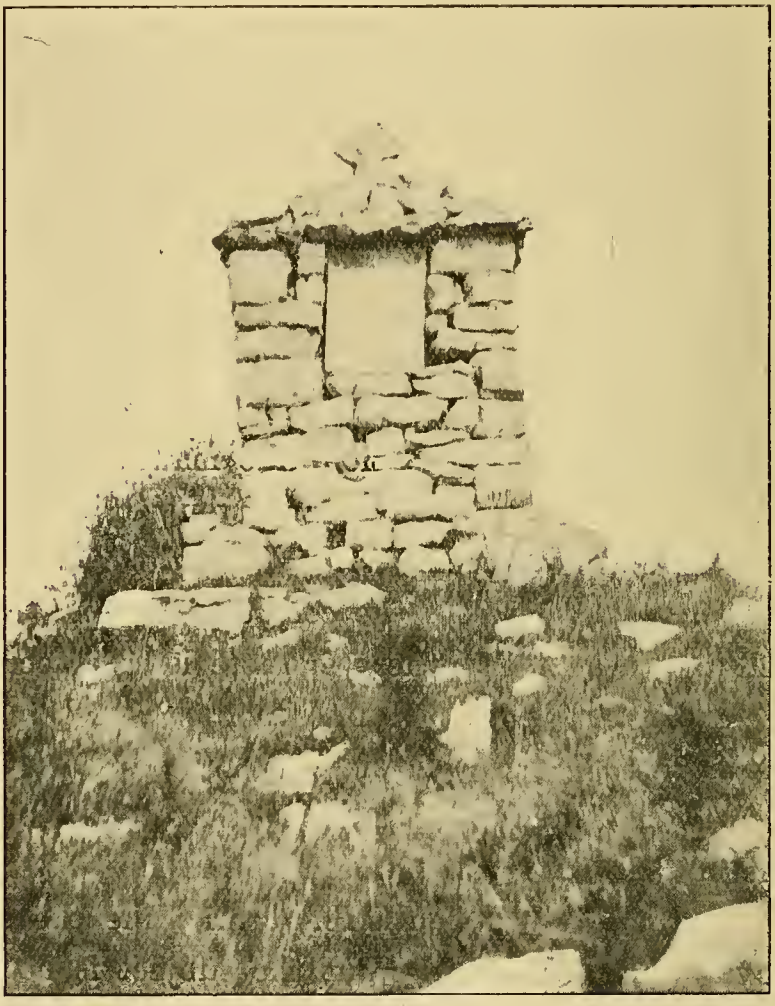
Cong possesses three grand features at least, two of which are unique. It can boast of a ruined Abbey; an

unusable and never used canal; and, lastly, an underground river. Plenty of other places can boast abbeys, but no other place that we know of has at once a similar artificial and a natural attractive wonder. Tintern is, in the extent of its ruins, ahead of Cong; Melrose also, and Corcomroe, but the situation of Cong Abbey, as the auctioneer would say of it, leaves little to be desired.

Within a stone's throw lies the stupendous example of idiocy, want of forethought, and sheer waste of money —an elaborately planned and most substantially built canal of hewn stones, with locks, to connect the two vast lakes of Mask and Corrib. When completed it was found not to hold water—the porous limestone allowed the water to filter through. The intention, like many people's intentions, was admirable. Such a canal would have enabled steamers to come up from Galway right through into Lake Mask, and so traverse the centre of Ireland, and it is a well-known fact that wherever there is easy access to a pleasant place strangers will find their way there. The failure of this gigantic engineering scheme is another injustice to Ireland. When one views the colossal remains of this water-way, which never held water, the incongruity of it all is irresistibly comic, like the scene in many a Gilbertian play. But the subject is not one for merriment *in* Ireland. Still, we should not overlaugh, for are we without follies in England? I trow not. What about our Martello Towers?

Cong of to-day is simply a T-street—usual country, slumbrous Irish village, guiltless of any bait in itself to attract the traveller from the nearest railway station, eight miles away at Ballinrobe, but possessing the pecu-

liar, very peculiar, features just mentioned, and a certain unsophisticated individuality of its own. Along the road-side between Cong and Clonbur the traveller will notice collections of small wooden crosses placed on a mound



One of the Cresseens at Cong. This has carved upon the Stone Square, in relief, "JOYCE, 1712. Pray for the Soul."

behind a wall. These are called *cresseens*, and they have something to do with the past and the carrying of the dead to burial. One of them takes the more elaborate form of a stone, monument-looking structure, having

carved upon it, in relief, "Joyce, 1712." Cutting away all the surface of the stone and leaving the lettering only must have been a laborious task. In out-of-the-way districts in the Canary Islands I have seen analogous erections, where the corpse had been temporarily laid, to rest the men carrying it on their shoulders.



Cong Abbey.

The Abbey, or monastery, was founded by St. Fechan about 650, but little is known of its history till 1134, when a great part of the town was burnt and the Abbey plundered by the people of Munster. Roderic

O'Conor, the last native king of all Ireland, spent the last fifteen years of his life in seclusion within its walls. In 1201 the town and monastery were again plundered by William de Burgo, who had the boldness to repeat his ravages in 1204, and in 1310 the unfortunate place was once more ransacked by one Hugh Breifneach. Truly, those were troublous times.

However, the Abbey is better described by photographs than by tedious description. The usual guide-books wax prosy, in small type, over the latter, to which the learnedly inclined may be referred. Suffice it to say, the building—what there is of it—was saved from complete dilapidation by Sir Benjamin Guinness, and the process of preservation has been continued by his son, Lord Ardilaun.

Unfortunately for the tourist the whole of the lands around belong to this family, and a stout, high, stone wall, many miles in length and quite six feet in stature, runs completely round the estates, effectually preventing the enormous tract of country they jealously enclose being seen by the pedestrian or cyclist. Even the driver and travellers on a car can only very occasionally catch fleeting glimpses of the sylvan treasure these jealous walls encircle. I therefore advise the tourist to put up further on at Clonbur, where, at the Mount Gable Hotel, he will find a hostelry second to none in cleanliness and good feeding I have ever visited in Ireland, kept by an Englishman and a good angler.

In this neighbourhood are the famous preserves for woodcock, rigorously watched over by the owner, Lord Ardilaun. The coverts are said to be the best in the



The Underground River between Lakes Mask and Corrib here rises beneath the bluff on the left, and after flowing for 100 yards again descends underground on the right.

British Isles. When the Prince of Wales shot over them the slaughter of woodcock and other game was prodigious.

From Clonbur, only four miles from Cong, the sights of the latter are most conveniently visited. The underground river, which is of course nameless, connects the great northern lake, Mask, with Corrib on the south, and it must pleasantly meander about deep down in the limestone rocks and caverns beneath the ancient Abbey and elsewhere.

Other underground rivers are not unknown. Mr. F. C. Selous relates that near El Maly, in Asia Minor, he passed a huge cave at the foot of a range of hills, into which a considerable stream of water poured itself and disappeared. This was the Bashkos River, which runs for several miles in a subterranean channel under the hills before again reappearing.

At one point the Cong underground river curiously rises just below a steep, natural limestone bluff, continues its peaceful, sluggish course for a hundred yards, and then as mysteriously descends once more into the bowels of the earth. This spot, exceedingly picturesque, is the scene of one of our photographs.

At another spot on the road between Clonbur and Cong, about 400 yards from the highway, in the midst of a plantation of trees—beech, Scotch fir, alder, holly, ash, plane, and nut—is a phenomenon named "The Pigeon Hole." A native informed me this was "a great affair." So it is. A natural split has here taken place in the ground, or a cave formed by solution of the carbonate of lime in the stone, and artificial aid has

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roughly hewn sixty-one steep steps in the solid rock, nearly straight down, till the underground river is reached at the bottom. The sides of this weird entrance to earth's recesses are clad with a luxuriant growth of ivy and many species of fern. Pigeons, no doubt, find there happy nesting nooks, which accounts for the name it has received. The year 1905 being exceptionally dry (so dry a year in Ireland had not been known for at least thirty years), when I went down to the bottom with my whole-plate camera, I found the river-bed quite dry, and standing in it amid the rough boulders, over which usually the river ran, took a photograph looking upwards at the opening above, whence I had descended. Probably such a photograph of the Pigeon Hole has never before been taken. On either side of me, six feet away, was the low entrance of a cavern. I threw a stone into each, and a splash shewed that the river was still there, and that I was really standing on a dry mound in the river course.

I did not see the famous white trout associated with this spot, for such, in fact, never existed, which is a good reason why. But in the neighbourhood the legend of this species is firmly believed in.

Once upon a time, very long ago, lived a beautiful young lady in a castle near the lake. She had long chestnut hair, and her large hazel eyes had been put in with dirty fingers, so you can imagine how lovely she was. She was promised to a king's son, when of a sudden he was murdered and thrown into the lake. The fair lady went out of her mind because of this awful catastrophe, particularly as he was a king's son, and so she pined away until nothing was left of her—good, bad, or indifferent.



Pigeon Hole, Cong. The Entrance to the Underground River.



Pigeon Hole, Cong. Taken from the dry bed of the Underground River looking up towards the Entrance.

People said the fairies had taken her away from the scene of her mourning. Soon after this interesting event and local excitement a white trout was observed in the river at the bottom of the Pigeon Hole. A white trout had never been seen there before (or anywhere else for the matter of that), so the neighbours apparently jumped to the conclusion that it was a fairy—all except one wicked "sojer," who had just come to these parts. He, rash man, declared it was a real trout, and he would prove his words by catching and eating it. He did the first, but when he put the trout in the frying-pan it squealed out like a Christian. Nevertheless, the bold "sojer," nowise daunted, turned the fish, and behold it was not cooked at all—no sign of frying about it. So he ups with his knife and makes a wickedly-intentioned cut at it. The instant the blade came in contact with the fairy-fish there was a screech, and the trout jumped clean out of the frying-pan into the fire, and at the spot where it fell arose a lovely lady dressed in white with a band of gold in her hair, and blood running down her arm. "Look where you cut me, you villain," she said, or some other strong words to that effect; "could you not leave me cool and comfortable in the river and not make me unpleasantly hot and disturb me in my duty?" At the word "duty" the red-coat naturally felt sorry for his action, and asked her ladyship's pardon, for he was too good a soldier to interfere with anyone while on duty. "I was watching for my true love, who is to come to me by water, and if he should come while I am away I'll turn you, naughty man, into a pumpkin, and I'll never leave off hunting you and rolling you over and over while grass grows or water runs."

"Dear lady," replied the soldier, "I would take you back to the river, but how could I find heart to drown so much loveliness?" He said no more. At that moment he saw no lady, but merely the trout on the ground in front of



Cong Abbey. King O'Conor's Head carved above door. The near side of this postern gate is in co. Mayo; the far in co. Galway.

the hearth. He tenderly picked it up, put it on a clean plate, ran back to the Pigeon Hole as fast as his understandings could take him, and gently replaced the fish in the river. From that day to this there is a little red mark

on the trout's side where it was cut. The story concludes, as all such stories should, with a lesson—like a moral of the Ingoldsby Legends. That "sojer" became an altered man. He regularly attended mass. He fasted three times a week (but he never ate fish), and in course



Cong Abbey. The Carved Head above door is of the last Abbot.

of time he left the army and turned a pious hermit, praying all day and all night, when he was awake, for the soul of the beautiful lady. Such is the legend of the Pigeon Hole.

The Abbey has two quaint and old-time looking postern gates. Above one is a head carved in stone of King O'Conor, the last native king of Ireland, who died in 1198. The river side (near in the photograph) of this gate is in County Mayo; the far, in County Galway. Over another postern is the carved head of the last Abbot of Cong. These heads were carved by one Peter Foy, whose grandsons, all carvers in stone, still live in the village.

Standing on the bridge one sees from here the fine mansion, Ashford, of Lord Ardilaun, and on the left, close to the shore, the old monks' Fishing Lodge. This is now a ruin, but one can make out the sluice through which heedless fish went into the net. When a *big* fish entered the trap a bell rang in the Abbey, which signal must have delighted the hearts of those monks, so fond as they were of salmon and trout:

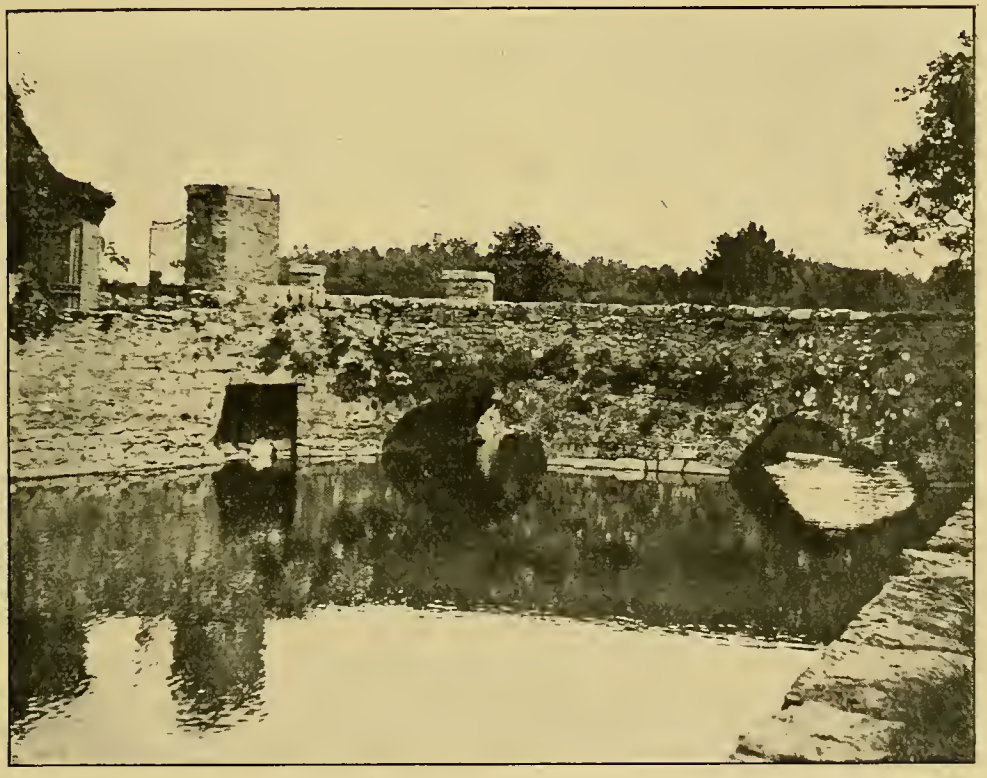
> "I envy them—those monks of old,
> Their books they read, and their beads they told:
> To human softness dead and cold,
> And all life's vanity."

Hibernia Illustrata gives the following explanation of the banishment of the monks: "The monks of Cong were banished in consequence of the following circumstance: The proprietor of the place, who was named Richard Bourke, and his wife, being invited to dine at the monastery one day, the lady, on seeing that the ingenious friars had their nets and fishing-rods so contrived that through a chink in the wall the end of the rod and line passed from the river outside to the table at which they dined, and that on the end of the rod was



Cong Abbey. The Monks' Fishing Lodge, shewing the Sluice through which Fish went into the Trap.

placed a small bell which rung whenever the bait was taken or the net was struck by a fish in the river, became so covetous of the place and the other beauties and useful contrivances belonging to it that she vowed she would be possessed of it, and never ceased till she got her husband to yield to her entreaties and banish the whole fraternity. They were said to be 700 in number when banished."



The old Monks' Bridge, Cong Abbey. Note the three styles of Arches.

Those monks must have abounded in originality, a striking example of which is afforded by the arches of the bridge they constructed to carry the road over the river. The arch nearest the entrance is a square one, more or less; the next is fairly regularly oval, the next is an attempt at oval with a tendency to one side.

The old stone, somewhat out of the perpendicular, and rather squat Celtic cross at the end of the village street —the top of the T at the junction—is not to be confounded with the famous "Cross of Cong" now in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. This has attained a world-wide celebrity as a magnificent work of art. The cross is made of silver, richly chased and washed with gold. In the good old days gone by it was not allowed to leave the parish, but bad times came, and so poor had the church become that the Roman Catholic clergyman sold it to Professor M'Cullagh for £100 in order to raise funds for the repair of his chapel. The cross is a most interesting memorial of the period preceding the English invasion, and shews a very high state of art in the country at the time when it was made, which was early in the twelfth century, in the reign of Therdelach Na Conchovar (or Turlogh O'Conor), father of Roderick. This date is supplied by the Gaelic inscriptions, extremely clear and well cut, which cover the silver edges of the cross, and which, besides giving the names of the king and of a contemporary dignitary of the church, preserve that of the artist himself, who was an Irishman. A Latin inscription informs us that it contains a precious relic—a portion of the wood of the "true cross;" and this circumstance will account for the veneration in which it has been held for ages. The cross is studded "full of precious stones," or rather imitations of them, disposed at regular distances along the edges and elsewhere. The central crystal is surmounted by an elegant ornament in gold; and all the rest of the cross, both before and behind, is richly

adorned with an interwoven tracery of that peculiar kind which the Irish were so fond of. The tracery is of solid gold (alas! since found to be only gold washed—all is not gold that glitters). The inscribed edging is of silver, and both are separated from the wooden frame by plates of copper, the whole being held together by nails, of which the heads are little heads of animals. The shaft also terminates below in the double head of an animal, which is large and very finely executed. The shaft of the cross is about two feet and a-half in length, and the horizontal portion nineteen inches.

The street or market cross of Cong, of dark limestone, has an inscription on the plinth or base which, being translated, is: "A prayer for Niahol and for Gillibard O'Dubthaidh, who were abbots of Cong." The inscription is not in Irish character but in the black-letter text of the fourteenth century. The cross itself is only sixteen inches high, and measures thirty-six by thirty inches along the upper surface.

Two miles from Cong, on the road to Maam, up a side road leading to Clonbur, only about half a mile from the latter village, is the scene of one of those awful murders which shocked the civilized world. On Saturday night, about 8 o'clock in the evening, on September 25th, 1880, was murdered on the road William Browne, Viscount Montmorres. He was the fifth Viscount, and was only in his forty-eighth year. He had just attended a meeting of the magistrates at the Court House, Clonbur, at which a resolution had been passed calling upon the Government to take coercive measures, and left the place about 8 o'clock in the evening. Half an hour afterwards his

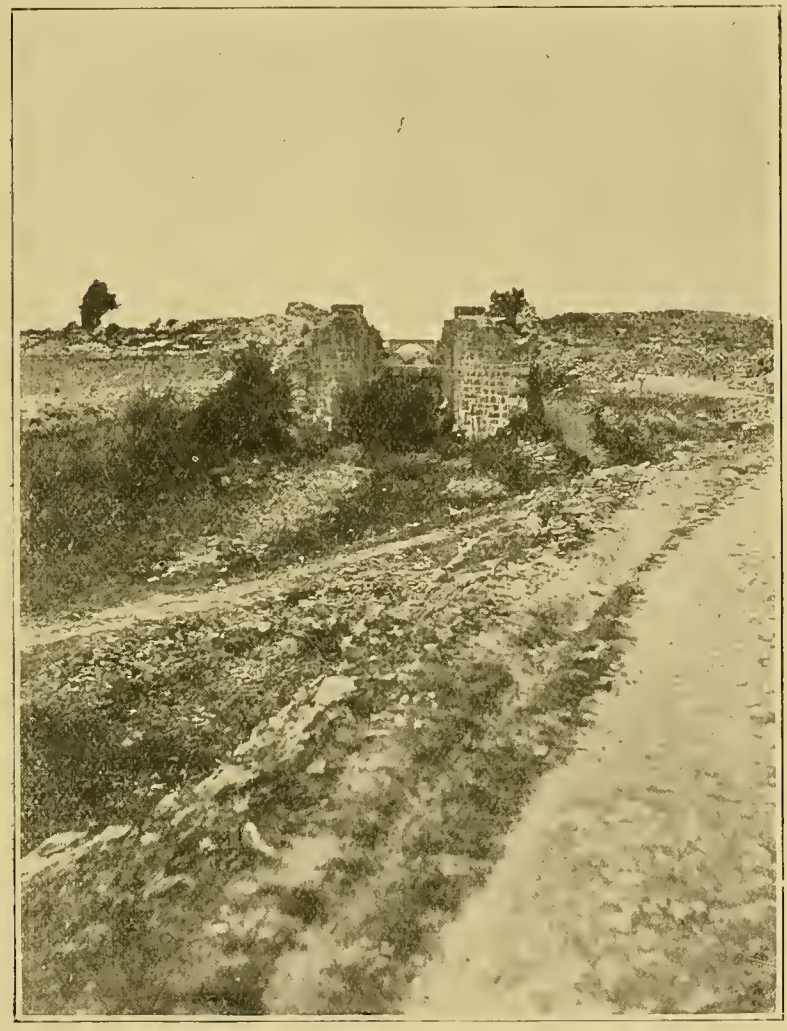
horse and car arrived at Ebor Hall, a mile distant, without him. Search was made, and he was found lying at the side of the road in a pool of blood and lifeless. He had received one rifle bullet in the head, which penetrated his skull, three in the neck, and two in the body. A lantern was found near where the body was lying and a bottle of whisky in the well of his carriage. At the inquest, Dr. Hegarty said the wound in the forehead had marks as if of powder surrounding the orifice, which shewed that the bullet that had entered had been fired at short distance. From the number of wounds evidently more than one person took part in the murder.

One of his tenants—he only had a small property in Galway—was arrested on suspicion, but as nothing could be proved against him he was not detained.

Singularly enough I happened to be staying in Clonbur last Autumn (1905), when one evening I heard proceeding from a cottage the dying groans of a man. A priest entered, and, I supposed, performed the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Next morning early I heard the keen—that dismal soul-rending cry of anguish. I knew the man had died. From several sources I was given to understand the dead man had been the principal agent in the assassination of Lord Mountmorres. These things are common talk on the countryside all over Ireland. The people generally know who do the desperate deeds, but keep silent.

The useless canal was cut and built, a length of some forty-five miles, at the time of the famine, and one Nimmo was the engineer. The stones, fine square blocks, which must have cost much labour to quarry and shape,

are now gradually being pulled out of their places in the sides and carried away one by one. Buildings in the neighbourhood, peasants' cottages, and the few more pretentious houses consequently have a grand, solid

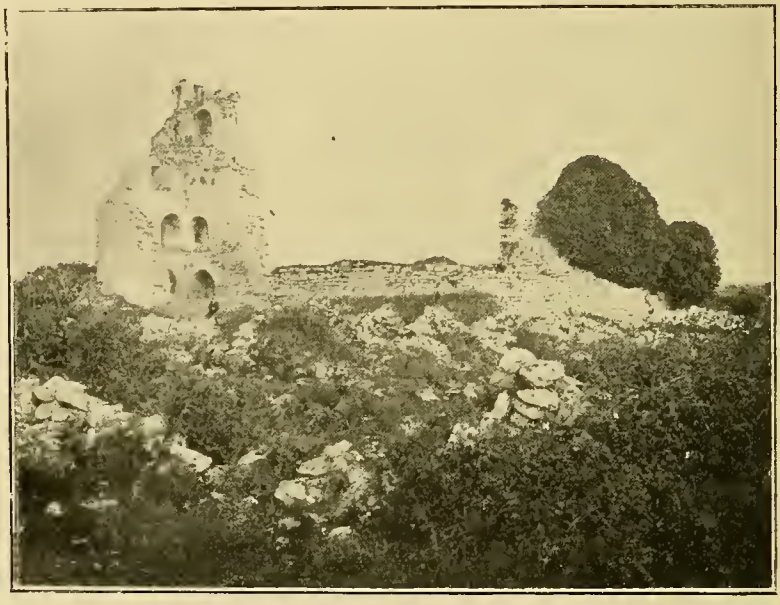


Part of the Useless Canal: shewing one of the Locks built of hewn limestone, intended to connect Lakes Mask and Corrib.

appearance, very unlike what one sees anywhere else in the west of Ireland. The mistake of one generation may, after all, be a boon and a blessing to another.

Those of us who have made egregious blunders may consider this and take heart.

Lake Corrib (formerly "Orbsen") is a fine sheet of water, thirty-five miles in length, the second largest in Ireland, and it abounds with salmon, trout, and pike. Popularly it is supposed to have as many islands in it as there are days in the year. This I cannot vouch for, as I never counted them, but viewed from the summit of one of the many hills around the shores the islets seem numerous, and varied in size and tree-covering.



Aughalard Castle, Cong.

Aughalard Castle, between one and two miles from Cong, between it and Clonbur, is worth the divergence, though hardly any visitors go to see it. It cannot be approached close by road, but a walk through fields is necessary. Very few people even know of its existence. Nothing at all is done to save the remains, which, during the last few years, have considerably lessened through

large masses of solid masonry having fallen from the towers. So overgrown with bramble bushes is the interior that little of what must have been fine apartments can be made out. As this is one of the most imposing of Ireland's ruined castles—and she possesses hundreds—I have come across, my photograph of it is here reproduced.

Doon, a finely-wooded promontory on Lake Corrib, between Clonbur and Maam, is worthy of a visit. The views from the summit are some of the finest in this part of Ireland, and vegetation is quite sub-tropical. I saw there specimens of the large-bell heather on the hill-side six feet high.

The promontory has a house upon it which is used as a shooting-box by Lord Ardilaun, the owner. Game abounds here, but it is of course strictly preserved.

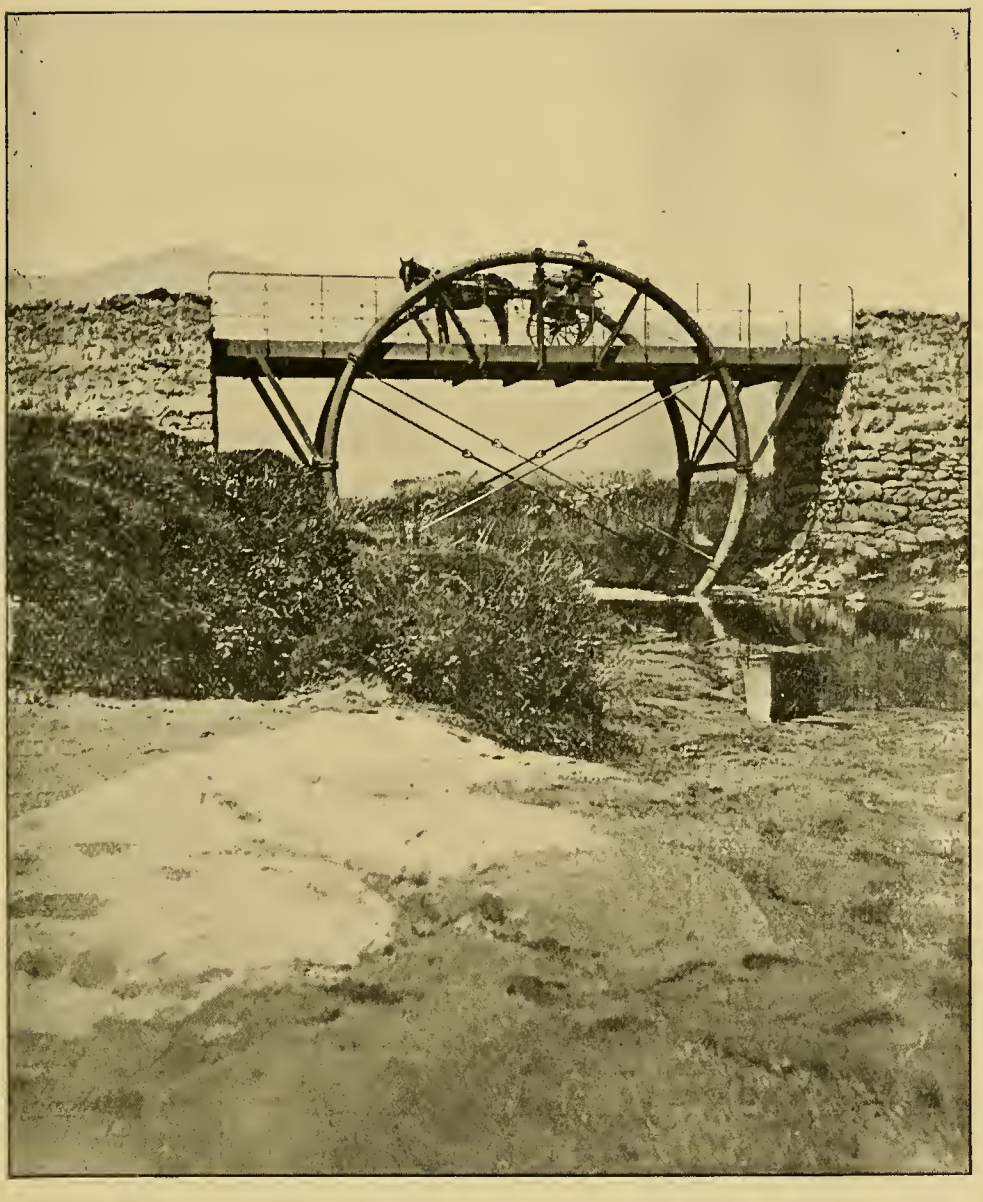
Clonbur is one of the best centres to stay at for fishing in Ireland. From it the two lakes, Corrib on the south and Mask on the north, can be fished, and both afford excellent sport. Lake Nafooey is also easily accessible from here. While at the Mount Gable Holel at Clonbur I extracted from the Visitors' Book one or two records of the sport, *not* selecting the biggest catches. Here is a typical one: Fifteen days' dapping in Lake Mask yielded this angler sixty-nine fish, weighing 82 lbs. The largest were 4 lbs., $3\frac{1}{4}$, $2\frac{3}{4}$, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The largest trout, trolling, were 7 lbs., $6\frac{3}{4}$, $6\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$, $4\frac{1}{4}$, 4 lbs. Total, eighty-eight trout, weighing $115\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. In addition, the same angler caught eight pike, from 11 lbs. downwards. This gentleman was staying there in July last year. The biggest pike ever caught by angling, of which there is authentic record,

came out of Lough Mask. It was caught in 1900, and weighed 40½ lbs. Mr. Ernest Phillips says in *Baily's Magazine* (January, 1906), "But the fish was caught in the spawning season, was heavy with spawn, and in normal conditions would probably not have weighed more than about 35 lbs." In the early part of 1905, two pike were gaffed in Lough Mask—one 42 lbs., the other 48 lbs.

Pike are terribly destructive to trout. All over the West of Ireland one hears on the spot from natives (keepers and poachers) that trout are getter scarcer and scarcer and that pike are rapidly increasing. At Maam for instance I found that trout fishing has almost ceased—it is all pike fishing or nothing. Murray (*Wild Sports of the West*), relates in his day (1830—1850) the same story. He gives a very pertinent concrete instance. Within a short distance of Castlebar there is a small bog-lake called Derrens; and ten years ago it was celebrated for its numerous and well-sized trout. Accidentally pike effected a passage into the Lough from the Minola River, and now the trout are extinct, or, at least, none of them are caught or seen. Previous to the intrusion of the pike, half-a-dozen trout would be killed in an evening in Derrens, whose collective weight often amounted to twenty pounds.

The same author relates that a pike turning the scale at *ninety-two pounds* was taken out of the Shannon. He says "About seventeen years since, when visiting the late Marquis of Clanricarde, at Portumna Castle, two gentlemen brought to the Marquis an immense pike, which they had just caught in the River Shannon, on the banks of which they had been taking their evening walk. Attracted by a noise and splashing of the water, they discovered in a

little creek a number of perch driven on shore, and a fish, which, in pursuit of them, had so entangled himself with the ground, as to have a great part of his body exposed and



Curiously-shaped Bridge over the Fooey River, near Lake Nafooey.

out of the water. They attacked him with an oar that by an accident lay on the bank and killed him. Never having

seen any fish of this species so large, they judged it worth the observation of the Marquis, who, equally surprised at its magnitude, had it weighed, and to our astonishment it exceeded the balance at ninety-two pounds ; its length was such that when carried across the oar by the two gentlemen who were neither of them short, the head and tail touched the ground." This huge pike does not of course displace the record Lough Mask fish caught by angling we have referred to.

Cong can be reached from Leenane by two routes, one by Lake Nafooey, the other by Maam Bridge (twenty miles). At the head of Lake Nafooey, a stream at the head of a deep ravine makes a precipitous and tall waterfall, prettily framed with ferns and trees, and a little further on a bridge made like a gigantic bicycle is crossed. The route by Maam Bridge leads past shores of Lake Corrib and the Doon promontory.

From London, Cong is reached by the usual London and North Western Railway route from Euston. From Dublin the Midland, Great Western Railway Company takes the traveller to Ballinrobe, whence he must drive on a car to Cong or Clonbur. A wire to the Mount Gable Hotel, Clonbur, or to the Carlisle Arms at Cong, will always ensure a car at Ballinrobe.

It is worth mentioning that apparently Clonbur is a good place for those troubled with bronchial asthma. Mr. Allen of Clonbur told me that since he has lived there he has had a new lease of life, for before his life was almost unendurable by reason of that distressing complaint.



A typical Connemara Cabin. Note Manure heap in front and the Primitive Chairs.

CHAPTER XII.

The Connemara Cabin and its Inhabitants.

The typical and usual Connemara Cabin is still disgracefully insanitary and dirty. The manure heap is the prominent object just outside the door. The house itself is built of unmortared stones, and consists of a single room—no ceiling, no wooden floor: the ground is as the ground was when the covering was put over it. At one end of this ground-floor apartment is the large wooden four-poster bed, at the other a general abiding place for animals and cocks and hens. These latter roost often on the beams above the bed! Usually in a niche in the wall by the bedside is a laying-place for the hens.

The turf fire on the floor never goes out night or day, and as the fumes of peat are very aseptic, this fact no doubt partially accounts for the absence of disease due to overcrowding. The constant fire also ensures a certain amount of ventilation even at night time, when the strange medley of inhabitants are all closed up together.

Here dwell husband, wife, and children of all ages. The Irish are fond of children too, and their liking is plentifully satisfied. It is wonderful how they live thus, and where they repose at night altogether, many will say. So it is. I have never spent a night in one of these strange communal palaces, so I know not. Still a very

considerable experience, now amounting to some thirty years, of the Irish Celt convinces me that nothing can change his manner of life. As his forefathers lived, so will he. He desires nothing different—he would not consider it better.



Mother and children going for water to the Spring, Connemara.

Those now living in this uncleanly condition must continue, and the only hope of a change for the better lies in educating the children, and by the increase of scientific knowledge, and also—a most important also—by *example.*



A Connemara Cottage.

If there were more residents from whom the natives might learn how to live decently by a series of practical object-lessons on the spot, the much-to-be-desired change would be quicker in coming. The Irish peasant can be taught more by example than by precept. He cannot be driven.

Do you know the best way to get a pig on board a ship? Put his nose to the plank and then pull him backwards by his tail, when he will at once do as you really wish—run along the plank on board. The Irishman, like his pig, requires thoughtful judicious handling, and he is most susceptible to true sympathetic kindness.

The native Irishman is a curious and at the same time a delightful mixture of incongruity and oddments. He grows on you and you are bound eventually to like him, even though at first you resist the process. I have known a servant dismissed repeatedly and "finally," only to turn up again smiling and saying "Sure he didn't think of going, why should he?" A good Irish man-servant is invaluable. He can turn his hand to any mortal thing. Horses he loves. He cleans windows, does odd jobs about the house, waits admirably at table, and looks after your interests jealously, and always has a smiling face. He is remarkably quick of brain and soft of heart. He is valorous, making an excellent soldier.

Take the Irish element from our army and our past grand military history would be of little account.

The women are chaste as wives, the men restless and cruel as husbands.

They are a nation of born poets. They are profuse, even generous in their gifts. When thrifty, miserly poor and

fearful usurers. In other words they are magnanimous yet mean to a degree. They are excellent servants, as I have said—bad masters.

They are wonderfully witty and imaginative. I remember a poor Irish woman offering to sell me a housewife by the roadside. I said jokingly, "My good woman I don't sew." Like a flash of lightning she replied, "Neither may ye reap."

The men are most ingenious, yet lazy, casual, and inaccurate. They will spend hours puzzling out a new method for overcoming a difficulty in any mechanical contrivance and will succeed, but will not do a day's straightforward work.

Here is an example of the clever though rude originality of the Irish Celt. A boulder from the mountain fell about one hundred yards from Mick's cabin, and lodged by the roadside, and Mick converted it into a pig-sty. It took some thought, much trouble and work to construct the roof and arrange the opening so that it could be securely sealed up at night with a large stone, but Mick did not mind that. The mere fact of the possibility of turning Nature's derelict into use and the contrivances necessary to effect that purpose made the work a true pleasure. There is always a touch of sentiment in the Irishman, and therein lies the difference between Celt and Saxon. Your English peasant would hardly have thought of the plan; if he had, his cool reasoning faculties would have persuaded him that a pig-sty so far from his cottage was not advantageous, and also that the same amount of labour involved in converting the monolith into a domicile would be better spent in constructing a properly arranged stone-

built pig-house close to his own door. This particular boulder pig-sty is to be found on the road to Salruck just after the main road from Tully to Leenane is left, as the hill is being ascended.

The Irish are unreflecting and at the same time logical, full of sympathy, yet will have nothing of discipline.

They are full of superstition coupled with much



An example of Irish ingenuity. A Pig-Sty made out of a fallen boulder by the roadside.

common sense. They are singularly patient under suffering, and will endure much for those they love or respect. They are a delightful people to mix with.

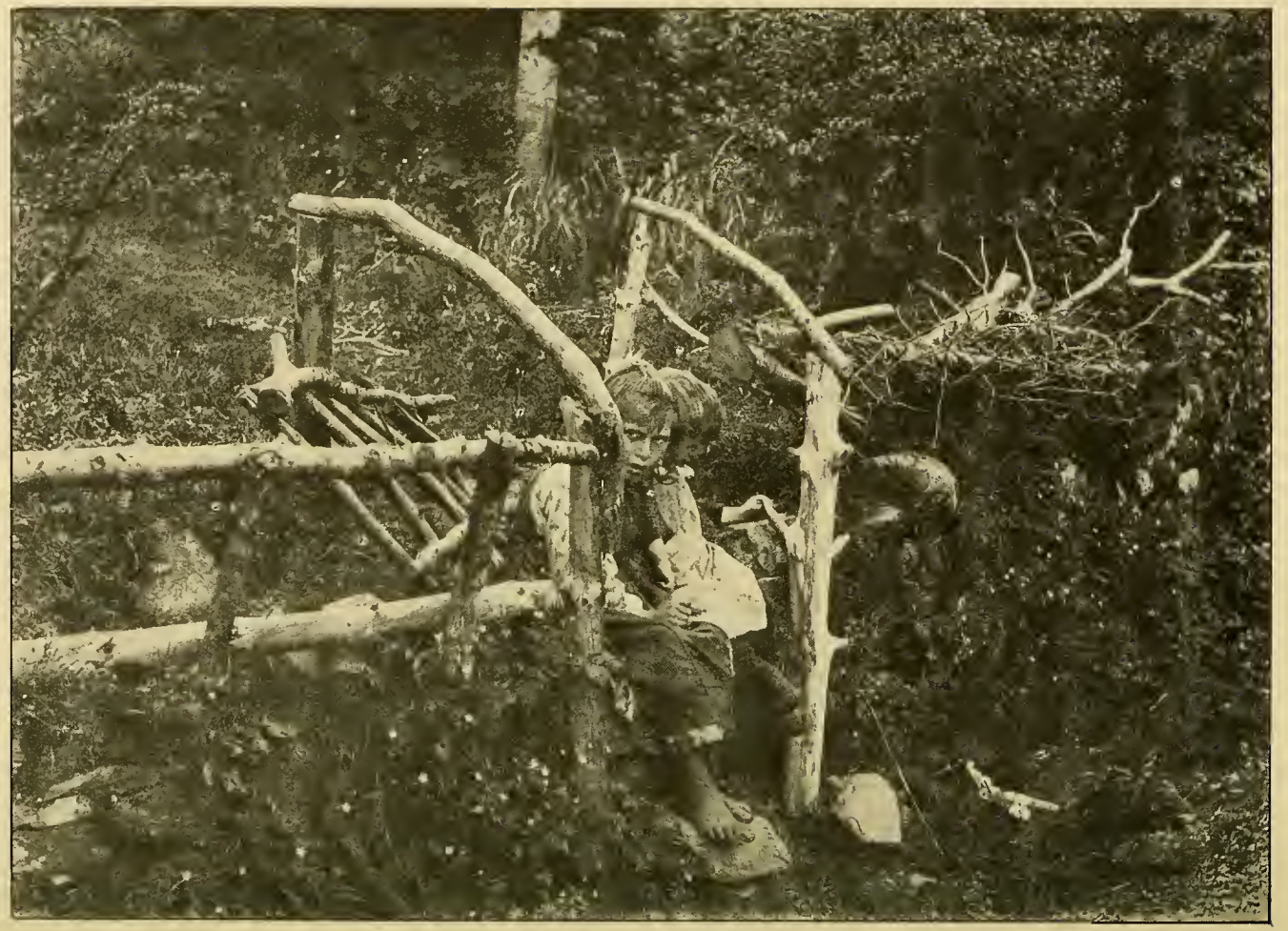
They require firm handling, the handling of kindliness without any flattery, the handling borne of single hearted, sympathetic interest. From persons imbued with the love

of the Irish—and they are sharp to detect the seeming from the real—they will take meekly the most brutally plain, honest speaking.

It is said, and I suppose believed by many writing on Ireland, who know little personally of the country, that Paddy is an unmitigated liar, that as regards veracity he bears no comparison to the Scot or English. I have no hesitation in saying that this is a libel. I do not think an Irishman tells a lie any more intentionally than his neighbours across the sea. The Irishman is not dull and stupid. He sees a joke or a good story, and can tell a joke or a good story in fine style, far better than the average Englishman or Scotsman. He may bounce, exaggerate, or "white lie," but the *animus furandi* is absent. He is so impulsive, so imbued with quick geniality and kindness of heart that he is, alas! only too eager to fall in with all you say, all you suggest, to dissent sometimes as he ought to do for exact truth's sake. In short, Pat finds it far easier to say *yes* than *no*. Surely he is not singular in that respect?

And they love their children as I have said. A kindness to a little one is never forgotten. A simple act of any medicinal value done to a child ensures the mother's absolute devotion. Woe betide anyone that did you an injury when once you have won the heart of even the most despicably poor cabin.

In probably few other countries in the world are the little ones more petted, fondled, and thrashed than in Ireland. This is fortunate, as the Irish quivers are full ones, and were cruelty or neglect common, infant suffering would be great. In the wilds of Connemara the cabin



Connemara Children. A study by the wayside.

toddlers are singularly shy, running away into the dark recesses of the primitive communal dwelling on the mere approach of a stranger like rabbits into a warren. To take a photograph of them in their native wilds is exceedingly difficult, requiring not only the employment of some casuistic diplomacy but also the consumption of much patience. The two children in the accompanying wayside picture had seen me approach, and then had watched me apparently absorbingly engaged in taking a view in a direction exactly opposite to their cottage. Curiosity at last brought them out to witness the strange proceeding, and when I had prolonged the operation till confidence had been inspired, I turned the camera round and obtained a "sketch"—the local Connemara equivalent for photograph—but not of both. The curiosity of the bare-footed sister had held her admirably quiet, but the change in my position made the little brother shyly turn his head away and nervously begin to play with the wood of the picturesque stile on which they sat.

The traveller in the West of Ireland may at once, and for all, during his stay there discard and get quite rid of the usual English taciturnity. God gave you a tongue. Use it you can freely and without restraint on Irish soil, and the people will like you all the better for so doing. You can never be wrong in asking anyone you meet to do anything for you. What you desire will probably be done with courtesy and willingness. If you ask a native the way he will as likely as not walk a mile from his destination in order to shew it to you.

The English idea that time is money must be put far from you in Ireland. Everyone has time there, and in

Ireland you have no business not to have time like the inhabitants.

The Irishman likes to talk, talk, talk. It breaks up the dull, unsympathetic, dumb silence of the mountains, bogs, lakes, and wild scenery, among which his lot is cast. If he did not talk, when he does get the chance he would become inhuman, at any rate dumb.

Help him, ye English who go to Ireland, and when in Connemara, talk, talk, talk. By so doing you will elicit from peasants, even from those most isolated from all human intercourse, sparks of wit, and fresh, novel word-twistings, and original thoughts which may surprise you.



SKETCH MAP
OF THE
WEST OF IRELAND
SHOWING
RAILWAY COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER XIII.

How to get into and out of Connemara—Tours in Connemara—The word "Connemara"—"The Corrib Ferry Fiasco."

There are easier countries to find one's way about in than the West of Ireland. This is not because the district is vast, but because the roads are circuitous and few in number, and considerable doubling is necessary if the country is to be well explored. Many of the most beautiful spots lie off the main roads, and walking is required if they are to be visited. Most of the finest ruined abbeys and castles can only be seen on foot, as they are in places unapproached now by roads. Probably that fact accounts for so few of them being known or visited by the tourist to the West.

The Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland runs nearly due west out of Dublin across Ireland. At Athlone it branches into two trunk systems. That going north leads to Achill Sound Station—the terminus on the mainland in Co. Mayo, where is the bridge over the narrow straits to Achill Island. The other branch, going practically straight on westward, leads directly to Connemara.

At Galway, which is 126½ miles from Dublin, the traveller retraces the main line for a few hundred yards, crosses Lough Atalia, an arm of Galway Bay, and then the river Corrib.

The line from Galway—the Gate of Connemara as it may well be called—to Clifden, in the centre of Connemara, is forty-nine miles long. It is a light railway, single track, abounding at its far end with fine views on either side of lake and mountain, which are only foretastes of even grander scenery to come when the railway is left for the country districts.

Oughterard station is seventeen miles from Galway, Recess thirty-six and a-half, Clifden, the terminus, as we have seen, forty-nine miles.

From Clifden, one of the usual routes is to go by long-car to Leenane, passing Letterfrack on the way. This route leads also, after passing Letterfrack, through the lovely Pass of Kylemore, where is the beautifully-situated and grand seat of the Duke of Manchester. From Leenane the usual tourist takes again the long-car on to Westport, where once more the rail is met, and so to Achill.

Another way into Connemara is by taking the northern branch of the Midland Great Western at Athlone and proceeding to Claremorris, where a change is made for Ballinrobe. From this place one has to drive nine miles to Cong and Clonbur. From Cong or Clonbur the traveller can drive to Leenane by either of two routes and so back to Clifden or Recess, or he can go on straight north to Westport.

Such, succinctly put, are the routes into and out of Connemara.

The trip *can* be rushed in two days. A fortnight can enjoyably be spent over it; a month or two delightfully. If the traveller be a fresh water, or sea, angler he will find

time fly. If an artist, botanist, geologist, or photographer, he need not have an idle moment.

The Hotels are at Oughterard, Recess, Clifden, Letterfrack, Leenane, Westport, Cashel Bay (nearest station Recess), Carna (Recess Station), Roundstone (Ballynahinch Station), Renvyle (Clifden Station), Cong, Clonbur (Ballinrobe Station), Maam Bridge, Westport.

Here, perhaps, a word of warning is necessary in these days of luxurious travelling and sumptuously-equipped caravansaries. The traveller accustomed to the palatial delights of magnificent hotels at English resorts of beauty and wealth, or who has enjoyed the epicurean luxuries of the Ghezireh Palace Hotel at Cairo, the Grand Hotel at Orotava, the Metropole at Brighton, or indeed of any of the now many delightfully sybaritic lounges at home or abroad, must forget such when in Connemara, and be prepared to brace himself or herself up for a more energetic holiday, a more strenuous spasm of life. The change will be wholesome and beneficial I promise. The delights and health they will obtain, many and much. The change will be thorough at any rate.

One of the great cries of the world of fashion at the present moment is change—novelty. These are undoubtedly obtainable in the West of Ireland. Ireland possesses charms of its own so peculiar and agreeable that (so far as I know the world) they are unique.

The two hotels most nearly approaching the first class hostels of the Continent and the States are the two built and run by the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland at Recess and Mallaranny. The latter is the better. It has surroundings of considerable charm—

hardly yet sufficiently appreciated—and is a delightful place to do nothing in, if that be possible.

The Mallaranny Hotel is entered by a level pathway direct from the station platform, and the lounge and public rooms are particularly suggestive of rest and comfort. The house is situated 100 feet above the sea level, and the grand prospect in front is over Clew Bay. The gardens and lawns of this hotel are well planted, and here the giant fuchsias will arouse the admiration of the visitor.

The next station to Mallaranny going west is Achill Sound, which is only eight miles distant.

Perhaps next to these two railway hotels in point of merit come the Leenane Hotel, the hotel at Cashel, and that at Clonbur, after which all the rest may more or less be lumped together in a category for indifferent food, not over clean bedrooms, and casual attendance.

At one or two a curious remnant of old Irish pride is still extant. The obvious ostler who at lunch comes in redolent of the stable and other duties to put the dishes on the long table, at which the visitors sit in two rows, at dinner-time puts on a semi-clean white shirt and old tail-coat, and does the waiting. The visitors think better food and less show of that kind would be more to their advantage. Still, be not discouraged; I say to the tourist: "Go on, sample them all, you will have much amusement and will enjoy yourself."

Nevertheless, I say it deliberately, hotels are much wanted in Connemara. Even small, Swiss-like chalets (open in the summer only), if clean and kept supplied with well-cooked, simple food, would be a boon. There is an

opening here for practical people in the hotel line who know their business. Some of the existing hotels are obviously kept by amateurs who know one branch of their business only—how to charge.

This fine country has a magnificent future before it, which will come quicker if the accommodation for visitors be provided in accordance with modern requirements.

Let it not be thought that I am indulging in superlatives over the beauty of the West of Ireland. For anyone to say that this or that country, this or that view is the finest in the world, is to display an amount of judgment and omniscience no traveller can possibly possess. No one has seen the whole of the world; no one ever will. The nearest approach to the right, to use a superlative in this connection, would be if the most travelled person in the world could start an infant on his voyage through life fully equipped with all his knowledge, and that infant, himself all his life an observant traveller, could similarly pass on his accumulations of observations and experiences, and this process could be repeated through many generations. Maybe, then, in the course of ages, there might be evolved a traveller who could plausibly use superlatives and be listened to without irritation, but not till then.

At any rate, I have not the very least pretensions to be dictatorial, and when I praise the scenery of Connemara it is only because it pleases me, because it suits my own peculiar idiosyncrasies. Others may think very differently to me, and quite rightly too.

There are several lodges, as they are called, or furnished cottages to let scattered throughout Connemara.

The rent for the summer season of, say, about August and September, varies from £15 to £30. As a rule there is no attendance included, and some of these cottages are miles away from any other habitation, and perhaps ten or twenty miles from a railway station. Hence the visitor has to bring a servant and a considerable amount of groceries, etc. Generally a butcher on a side-car or on horseback comes round once a week or fortnight with a limited supply of joints.

Eggs can be obtained cheaply at the cabins around, and thin hens, like skinny pigeons—at least six being required to make a moderately-sized dish. A good plan we have found by experience is to lay in a stock of poultry in the live state immediately on arrival at one of these cottages and fatten them up, gradually killing them off during the visit.

A young pig kept under similar limited life terms we have found an admirable, and eventually toothsome, arrangement.

Potatoes and turf for the fires can be had in abundance, and are not unusually thrown in without further charge with the rent.

To find out where these cottages are and where paying guests are received in one or two of the domiciles worthy of the name "houses," I have found it a good plan to select the district first and then write a particularly courteous letter to the nearest Church of Ireland clergyman asking for the required information. I have never known this plan to fail, but have always had, at any rate, kindly and even friendly replies.

The Church of Ireland clergy are anxious to encourage

English visitors to come over and see for themselves the beauteous surroundings in which they live, for Irishmen are proud of their country, as they have good cause to be.

I trust the Irish clergy will forgive my thus thrusting upon them the work of house-agency in addition to their other and onerous burdens, but I do it with the best intentions.

When visitors are in the neighbourhood it is just a grand time to get up bazaars and concerts for local requirements, and visitors to Ireland are glad to attend such functions and aid them in every way.

I must say for the Church of Ireland clergy that they work harder than the clergy of any church I know elsewhere, and the more I have seen of them during many years the more I have been impressed with their devotion and single-heartedness. The disestablishment of the Irish Church certainly put its priests upon their metal and was beneficial to the flocks.

The quickest route to Connemara is from Euston to Holyhead and thence to Kingstown or North Wall. The London and North-Western time-tables give every information.

Mr. Arthur Young, F.R.S., who went to Ireland in June 1776 for the purpose of writing his book on the state of husbandry there, relates that he took twenty-one hours in crossing on a "packet" from Holyhead to Dunlary, four miles from Dublin. The sea passage now on the first-class. finely-equipped steamers occupies about three hours and a-half or three-quarters.

Some intending tourists may desire information as to

the best expenditure of their time for varying periods. I therefore subjoin a set of planned tours, which, varied to suit the idiosyncrasy of the individual tourist, may be useful. I only give them as very skeleton suggestions, and hope the intending visitor may be able to more accurately plan out his trip after perusal of these pages and after studying the maps.

A Week in Connemara.

1. Galway.
2. Rail to Clifden.
3. Coach to Letterfrack.
4. Coach to Leenane.
5. Excursion to Salruck.
6. At Leenane, Delphi.
7. Coach to Westport.

A Fortnight in Connemara and Achill.

1. Galway. Rail to Oughterard.
2. Lough Corrib and Cong Excursion.
3. Rail to Recess.
4. At Recess. Rail to Clifden.
5. Coach to Letterfrack.
6. At Letterfrack.
7. Coach to Leenane.
8. Excursion to Salruck.
9. Excursion to Delphi.
10. Coach and rail to Mallaranny.
11. Rail and car to Achill.
12. In Achill.
13. In Achill.
14. Homeward bound.

A Fortnight between Galway and Sligo.

1. Galway. Rail to Recess.
2. At Recess.
3. At Recess. Rail to Clifden.
4. Coach to Letterfrack.
5. Coach to Leenane.
6. At Leenane.
7. Coach and rail to Mallaranny.
8. Rail and car to Achill.
9. In Achill.
10. In Achill.
11. To Ballina by rail.
12. To Sligo by public car.
13. About Sligo.
14. Homeward bound.

A Three Weeks' Tour.

1. Rail to Mullingar.
2. Rail to Athlone. Visit Clonmacnois.
3. Rail to Galway.
4. Visit Aran Islands.
5. In Aran.
6. Return to Galway.
7. Rail to Recess.
8. At Recess.
9. At Recess. Rail to Clifden.
10. Coach to Letterfrack.
11. At Letterfrack, or go straight on to Renvyle.
12. Drive to Salruck and on to Leenane.
13. At Leenane.
14. Coach and rail to Mallaranny.
15. Rail and car to Achill.
16. In Achill.
17. In Achill.
18. To Ballina by rail.
19. Car to Sligo.
20. At Sligo.
21. Homeward bound.

The long-car, as it is called, on which the tourist can travel cheaply in Connemara and the West of Ireland, is an enlarged elongated side-car. The passengers sit in two rows, back to back, and therefore, before a journey, it is well to ascertain which side of the car will face the best views, and take a seat there. These long-cars run through the season—roughly from June to September or October—and as there is no covering a plentiful supply of rugs and waterproofs should always be included in the traveller's luggage. Umbrellas are not of any use in the West of Ireland. Waterproofs are essential.

I subjoin some of the details concerning the long-cars, which will be found useful:—

Connemara Tourist Cars. Week-day Service.

Clifden .	dep.	2 0	P.M.	Westport	dep.	1 50	P.M.
Letterfrack	arr.	3 40	„	Leenane, *via*			
Leenane.	„	6 0	„	Erriff Valley	arr.	5 50	„
Leenane.	dep.	9 15	A.M.	Leenane	dep.	8 30	A.M.
Westport, *via*				Letterfrack	arr.	10 30	„
Louisburg	arr.	3 25	P.M.	Clifden .	„	12 30	P.M.

Fares: Clifden to Westport, *via* Louisburg, 10s.; Westport to Clifden, *via* Erriff Valley, 8s.; Westport to Leenane, *via* Erriff, 3s. 6d.; Clifden to Leenane, 4s. 6d.; Leenane to Westport, *via* Louisburg, 5s. 6d.

It may be as well to mention that what is called "Whip money" is expected, and always given to the driver. The fee is, say, 1s. per person between Clifden and Leenane, and the same between Westport and Leenane; 1s. 6d. Leenane and Westport, *via* Louisburg. The Louisburg route is by Delphi and Dhulough House.



Long-Car laid up for the winter in the main street of Inniscrone.

Dhulough House is opened as a hotel in the season by Mr. McKeown, of the Leenane Hotel, for the use of fishers in the neighbouring lakes and river.

The word "Connemara" is used very indefinitely and differently by various writers on Ireland. It signifies, as

I have said, "Bays of the Sea"—a very vague term as applied geographically. Many think, strictly speaking, it corresponds with the Barony of Ballynahinch, lying between the bays of Kilkieran and Ballinakill, and that the name is applied in a general way to the whole western division of the county Galway. Others assert that it is called Connemara after Cormac, the son of Fergus and Maeve, though this seems rather a *non sequitur* derivation.

In Sir James Ware's *Ireland* (translated by Walter Harris, 1764) occurs this passage: "There were several Territories of this name (Conmacne) in Ireland, as Conmacne de Mocreen in Brenny in the County of Longford .... Conmacne Mhara or Maritima in the County of Galway also, now the Barony of Ballinehinch, bounded N.W. and S. by the Western Ocean." This is clearly another derivation. But it is news to learn, according to Chambers's Encyclopædia, that Connemara is also called Ballynahinch. I have used the word in a very generic way to cover most of the West of Ireland I am writing about, and I see no reason why I should not be as geographically correct as others.

Some day another tour through picturesque scenery and interesting surroundings will be possible in Connemara—a circular round by Oughterard, through Clonbur and Cong, to Headford, and then across the water of the very narrow bit of Lough Corrib, near Kilroe, to Galway. This last essential link—a ferry across the narrowest part of Corrib—is still missing.

If the reader will look at the map, the extreme desirability of this ferry is at once apparent. The distance is

less than a mile, and it would be the means of opening up such places as Ross Abbey, Clydagh, Ballycurran. This portion of the country is at present a *terra incognita* to the tourist, in consequence of this small but imperatively necessary link in the chain of travel being wanting.

I understand that soundings have been taken and plans prepared under the Congested Districts Board by their officer some years ago, but, in the usual shuffling and shunting methods of this public department, they have come to nothing.

It is simply a gross public scandal—I say it as deliberately as it is possible, and with probably more personal knowledge from practical experience of this part of Ireland than almost anyone else now living—that money should be frittered away by the thousands of pounds annually on quasi-public objects and semi-charities benefiting a few only, when means of inter-communication between parts of the country are neglected, such as this ferry.

Throughout the West of Ireland the opinion I express has been endorsed with voluminous typical illustrations by all classes. I have heard the same sad tale from magistrates, barristers, large landed proprietors, the smallest tenants, and in each class from Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.

In nearly every instance where anything has been said in favour of this Board I found on inquiry that the speaker was in receipt of—or hoped to be in receipt of—some material benefit from the Board or its officials. Surely all these people are not prejudiced! Some I know are not, but are most solicitous that the money this Board has to spend should be properly expended for the permanent good

of the district as a whole, and after consultation with those knowing the West.

The members of the Board, all well intentioned, with a few exceptions, know nothing at all at first hand of the country over which they rule, and leave the entire management of the vast sums of money they annually disburse in the hands of officials.

The slough of muddling, and continual-experiment-trying, needs shewing up in all the light of day that is possible. And I am glad to say I am not alone in thus boldly and fearlessly stating the truth.

I may mention that that plucky Nationalist journal, *The Tuam Herald*, has, in its leading articles, repeatedly done the same. On this urgent matter of the ferry across Lough Corrib I may quote, as a sample, what this newspaper courageously wrote on March 31st, 1906. The article is headed "The Corrib Ferry Fiasco":—

"Either the project is in itself a desirable and feasible one or it is not. If the former we cannot see why it is not gone on with and expeditiously and efficiently carried out. If the latter, we equally fail to see why the public are not at once informed of the decision, and the matter ultimately and decisively abandoned. Yet, instead of that summary and satisfactory way of dealing with this matter, we have a lot of official dilly-dallying as if the authorities were unable or unwilling to make up their minds, and afraid of coming to a definite decision one way or the other. The whole matter is a trifling thing financially when one considers the expenditure annually sanctioned by the spending departments in Ireland; and what therefore makes its treatment the more unsatisfactory and annoying

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is the dilatoriness of the actions of the persons supposed to take action in a matter so transparently simple and easy. The whole project is the mere running of a little ferry across the Corrib Lake at its narrowest point—a work we should say involving no engineering difficulty whatsoever. We understand that in the district a considerable amount of public opinion had been excited and aroused in the matter, and that particularly on the Headford side the enterprise was looked forward to as one that would be one of great public utility there, enabling the residents to conveniently cross the Corrib and get to the Connemara side with little difficulty and delay. To tourists going into or coming from Connemara, if an easy and economical expeditory means of getting to Headford were available, there is no doubt but that they would to a large extent avail themselves of the opportunity, and so visit a district at present practically unknown to the ordinary traveller.

"At present such inter-communication between both sides of the Corrib residents is not possible except at the expenditure of much time and money, which of course deter its adoption. The bridging of the Corrib by means of a ferry would not interfere with or impede its present navigation, and would enable visitors to see Headford and Tuam, and by that way get into Galway.

"The Corrib country is really not sufficiently well known to the outside world, and many County Galway men even cannot realize how varied and beautiful is its scenery. Its many islands are really worth a visit. Some are well wooded, and all have an interest peculiar and fascinating in itself—that of Ardilaun, Inchagoil, and

others being especially so. In the latter is the grave of the nephew of Saint Patrick, and marking that sacret spot stands a pillar on which will be found inscribed the oldest inscription in Roman letters in Ireland. At Ross are the ruins of a fine Abbey, with cloister and clerstory in still excellent condition, the proportions of the old structure apparent, and no more interesting spot could possibly be visited by those who care to see what natural beauty is or to what artistic perfection our ancestors attained in their ecclesiastical architecture.

"If, as we are assured it is, the bridging of the Corrib by means of a ferry is regarded as a popular project, and if carried out one that would be a useful undertaking, we for our part are content to give it all the support in our power, calculated as it is to lead to such public benefit. We have almost to apologise to our readers for recurring to this subject at such length. Under ordinary circumstances, in an ordinarily-governed country such persistent public attention to a matter of admitted utility would be unnecessary. As we remarked, the work would either be done at once or abandoned, and none of this disappointing and disagreeable dilatoriness gone on with, to the annoyance of persons who mean business and who don't want public time to be taken up uselessly in endless reiteration and never-ending repetition of the same old sickening story of acknowledged utility of a work on the side of the public, and of miserable procrastination and neglect on the part of the officials concerned, reducing to a fine art the old miseries of roundabout red-tapeism and circumlocution. Verily, we believe for not doing things and yet having an appearance of work all the same there is no beating the

public bodies of Ireland, and it is a pity we have not a living Dickens to immortalise them in a story or a Swift to lash them with literary whips of scorpions in his mordaunt and immortal prose."

To speak thus strongly of an abuse *in* Ireland, by an Irish journal, requires pluck because the pecuniary interests of so many individuals are bound up in the preservation of the existing state of things, in the maintaining of a system under which public money may be conducted through channels from which small streams can conveniently filter away into private pockets. Those personally interested will howl and argue on reading this, as they have before at what I have written, but I return to the charge and am glad to be backed up by the best of journals of Ireland, which, like myself, have the true interests of the country at heart, and no axe to grind for anybody or any class.

The only remedy I know or can suggest is that the Congested Districts Board be wound up, its whole staff dismissed, and an entirely new body (preferably under another name, as the present one is provocative only of mirth in the West of Ireland) be appointed in its place.

A clean sweep is the only way to cleanse an Augean stable.

PART II.

COUNTY CLARE.

CHAPTER XIV.

New Quay (Co. Clare)—Finevara—Oysters—Corcomroe Abbey.

NEW QUAY, not to be confounded with the flourishing Cornish seaside resort of the same name, lies on the seashore in Galway Bay, exactly opposite to the ancient town of Galway, whose houses and lights are clearly visible nine miles away to the north across that fine inlet of the bracing Atlantic Ocean.

The County Clare New Quay has yet to make a name for itself, and this it is now endeavouring to do. Twenty years ago it was better known.

Its advancement was most unluckily handicapped by a Chancery suit in which the principal landowner was concerned, from which it has only just emerged. There is now, therefore, a good chance for it to succeed as a select, aristocratic, seaside resort for Galway, Gort, Limerick,

and even London people. New Quay has many features in its favour. It can never be plebeian, as the nearest railway station, Ardrahan (pronounced as if of two syllables and *Ardrain*), is eleven good Irish miles distant, and Galway by sea, as we have said, nine. Cheap trippers therefore cannot spend there a happy day—a desideratum of consequence to many people.

Leaving Euston Station by the Holyhead and Kingston mail at 8.45 p.m., and travelling across Ireland viâ Athlone and Athenry, Ardrahan is reached next day at about 11 a.m., a quick and not unpleasant journey with plenty of variety and change of scene. The car drive from Ardrahan to New Quay is, however, tame and uninteresting.

The delicious quietness and fresh balmy air of the Burren Barony of Co. Clare will always make it a favourite resting-place for those health-seekers in need of such qualities: and then, for Ireland, it is unusually dry. There are no streams. The shore is rocky with here and there patches of sand enough for bathing, but bathing machines or tents are at present unknown.

A steamer plies weekly (in calm weather only) between Galway and Ballyvaughan, which latter small town is about six miles distant, but only about four when one crosses the fiord-like branch of the sea by a ferry-boat at the Burren oyster beds. Long-cars meet the steamer at Ballyvaughan, and take on the tourist to Lisdoonvarna (the most important Irish spa, possessing three natural waters, iron, sulphur, and magnesia), a nine-mile drive by the lovely track up the Corkscrew Hill.

At present a few superior lodges, as the lodging-houses at New Quay are called, containing eight to ten rooms,

are to let furnished, without attendance, but some half-ruined cottages along the shore, just now bearing a very forlorn and Chancery-looking aspect, will shortly be rebuilt, furnished, and added to the domestic economy of the spot.

The intending visitor must not go to New Quay without having arranged in advance for his lodgings. Hotels and even inns are not. In Ireland never take anything for granted in the way of accommodation.

Socially the society, what there is of it, is delightful. Dances during the summer months are of nightly occurrence, and as one meets the same people at each, intimacies rapidly spring up, if not friendships. But these kind of more or less impromptu and simple entertainments they know how to get up, and successfully carry through without ostentation or bother in out-of-the-way parts of Ireland, better than in any other country with which I am acquainted. The walks round New Quay and its woods are suggestive of picnics—advantages which are thoroughly appreciated and taken advantage of in fine weather.

The predominant feature of the country inland is stones! They are everywhere, of all sizes and shapes, not quite accidentally chucked together, but, the scientific say, with a method in the madness of their deposition. The schoolboy would dub it a typical Balbus country, for it reminds one irresistibly of the old Latin grammar.

Stones generally don't strike you unless thrown. Here they obviously strike you without being thrown. They are always present, and no matter where you turn or where you look, like the poor, are with you persistently. You can't help being struck with them. Often when climbing

New Quay walls, of which in a short walk you may have to climb dozens, you will be lucky not to damage your shins and knees, and frequently you will bring down an avalanche of stones upon you in descending one of the stony barriers, for the component stones of the walls are in the loose or natural state as they are picked off the ground.

There are at least three current theories to account for the extraordinary stony nature of the Barony of Burren. One of them is that Noah's Ark got into troubled waters at this spot, and the Skipper in question had to throw out ballast in order to lighten his queer craft, so as to be enabled to sheer off to a more favourable dumping ground. Needless to say, this explanation presupposes the fact that his ballast was composed of carboniferous limestones. The theory is, however, eloquent of the Co. Clare idea of the size of the Ark, and will lend an additional interest to the ancient story for biblical Sunday-school teachers and scholars.

Another theory is more profane, and, if true, was probably accompanied with the expenditure of a heap of bad language as well as stones.

Once upon a time the Devil tried to effect a landing in Co. Clare, and happened to select that district now known as Burren for effecting his sinister purpose. Maybe he thought the inhabitants at that spot would be kindly disposed toward him, and would meet him half-way. They did meet him, but not quite in the manner he had anticipated. It is said they stoned him with stones of all sizes, from the pebble thrown by the youngster to the giant rock which could only have been hurled by the Irish giants of those times, and such a vast quantity of rocks

and stones were used that they remain to this day in testimony, the natives say, to the truth of the story. We do not know for certain, but we may fairly presume the New Quay people were better than his Satanic Majesty thought, and that he did not remain after such an alarming quantity of stones had been thrown at him, but limped off to a more favourable reception place where he was thought more of, and where the people were more in sympathy with his methods.

Then lastly, but least accurate according to all one hears in the cabins on the spot, is the scientific theory.

Imagine that some colossal giant of old, of the largest size imaginable, had made molten an unimaginable quantity of carboniferous limestone in a gigantic cauldron, and dropped the molten material in big splashes like thick toffee or glass over the surface of this part of County Clare; then, without waiting for it to cool, poured cold water on the top of the semi-fluid substance. The result would be a cake cracked up into pieces of all conceivable shapes and sizes. Such is exactly the appearance of the stony land of New Quay, and such the process that many, many years ago took place here, it is said. The fissures between the pieces vary from fractions of an inch to a foot or two.

In walking across these curious plateaux you have to jump from one block to another. It were hazardous to say how far these fissures run downwards. Maybe the square blocks, like pieces of sugar, are the tops of pillars, placed close together, of great length.

In between the cracks luxuriate lovely ferns—the poly-pody, the maiden-hair, and others—for they find in

the recesses the perfection of fern requirements as to shade and moisture. The scientists incline to the theory that these cracks are perpendicular, and of great depth, and are due to a softer material, or earth, having been placed between the harder limestone, and then in the course of time washed out. But the simpler-minded, unscientific, humbly ask how did the softer material get there at all and so evenly interlarded with the harder, and why and how was the limestone formed in these singular-looking blocks?

The theory, it seems to me, will hardly wash when confronted with all the local facts. For instance, how does it account for the huge local accumulation of limestones at all, and for the presence of occasional enormous blocks, or monoliths, resting quite unattached on the surface of these plateaux?

The majority of visitors will prefer one of the local traditional theories to account for the curious stone-formation of New Quay as being just as likely to be correct as that of the savants. Certainly they are more picturesque.

Not only does this cracked-up-china formation exist on the low-lying levels by the sea-shore, but it is found also on the extreme summit of the hills, looking there singularly inappropriate. Walking over it has to be done gingerly. Woe betide you if you carelessly set a foot or leg down one of the crevices! An ugly wrench, a sprained ankle, or even a broken leg quickly results.

It naturally follows, from the surface of the land being thus split up, that rain percolates immediately and disappears, making New Quay comparatively a very dry



New Quay, co. Clare. Stony land and a large Monolith.

place. There are no streams of any kind, and wells only at rare places, so that rain must run into the sea at some depth below sea-level.

Bogs are unknown at this westerly portion of the county, and so the turf for the fires has to be brought in rough-looking, strong sea-cutters from Connemara. Sometimes three or four of these picturesque craft are to be seen at one time discharging their cargo on the primitive wharf at New Quay. This is apparently the only use to which the landing-stage is put.

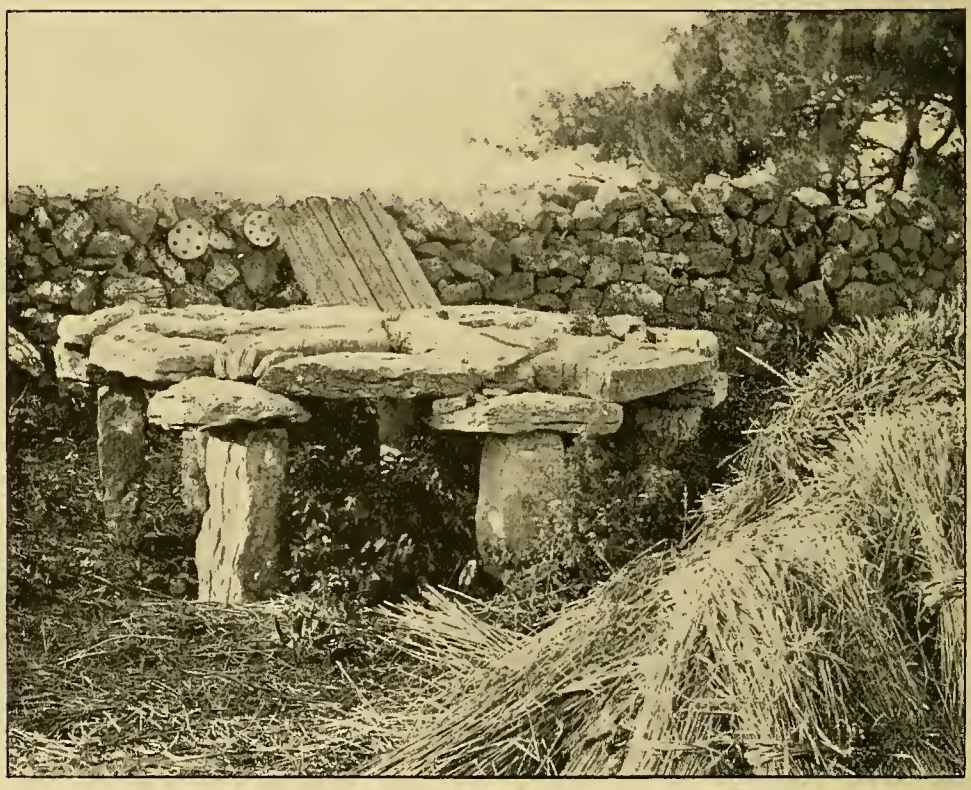
As might be expected, the country people are experts in loose stone formation. The cabins are all constructed of unmortared stones, with walls three feet thick or more. It is a convenient way of getting rid of some stones. In the centre of a field is often seen a huge pyramid, looking like the tumulus of some old Viking or ancient Irish saint. It is not. There is no other way of clearing the land for crops. Walls are built of awesome solidity, six or even ten feet wide, and at places where they are obviously not needed. Walls, too, that begin purposeless against no terminus and similarly end in vacuity are common.

Could calcareous limestone be only boiled down to glue or jelly or exported for any purpose under the sun, what an exhaustless source of wealth is here! Naturally, everything that can be constructed of stone is.

Even the round tables in the farmyards on which the ricks of hay or barley are built are made of large slabs of loose stones cunningly put together and self-supporting, without any mortar or cement being used. They are typical examples of Irish ingenuity.

The stiles by the sides of gates and over the walls are many, shewing great variety in their stone construction. But a short residence at New Quay makes the visitor independent of stiles and able to strike a bee-line across country, surmounting innumerable walls in a marvellously skilful manner.

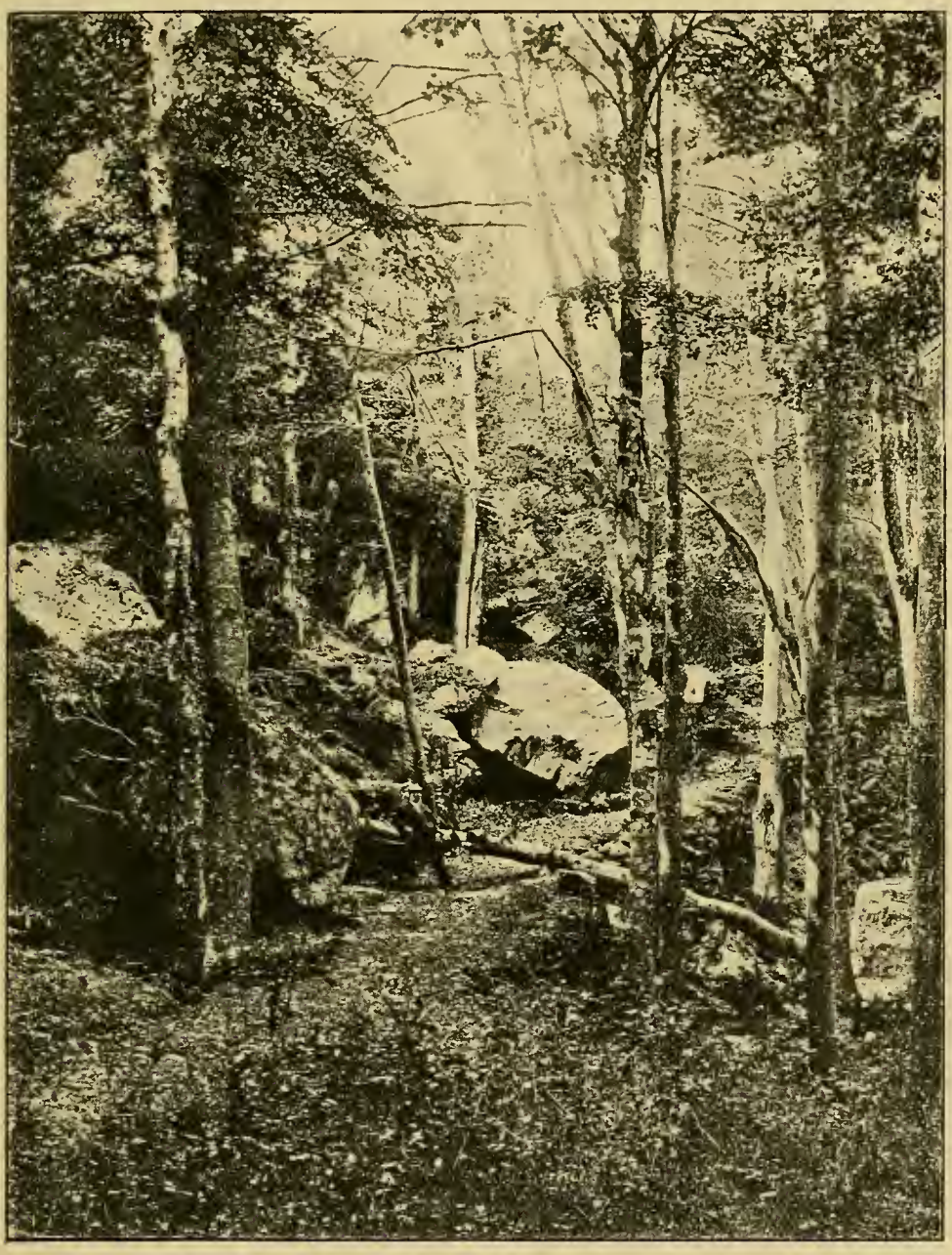
In startling contrast to the absolutely stony and



Rick Table made of Stones, New Quay, co. Clare.

barren nature of much of the land around, New Quay possesses, close to the shore at Finevara—a charming little typical Irish village—some of the most delightful woods it is possible to imagine. Extremes meet here as elsewhere. Ash, beech, and birch trees chiefly, with a luxuriant undergrowth of seedling trees, brambles, nut-

bushes, and ferns of several species, the Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly and the Grayling in abundance flitting



In the Woods, New Quay, co. Clare.

about the blackberry blossoms at open spots where the hot sun pierces the tree-trunks.

The gnarled, slim, silver pillars of the birch-trees, "tall and stately in the valley," and the umbrageous beeches, with moss-covered stones between, present happy vistas of ideal fairyland completeness, where one would not be surprised to find the little people dancing and dwarf-capped men of the mountain disporting themselves in stately revels. And when one emerges from the wood at the top of the hill, it is to find a flat top of cracked-up limestone, in quaint contrast to the foliage below, from which a varied view of mountains and interlacing fiords of the sea is obtained. Even up here ferns luxuriate between the fissures, where they find shelter from the cutting winds. But where the edges of the wood impinge on the sea the branches are keenly cut by the cruel winds, as if they had been there subjected to the skilful fingers of some precise demon tonsorial artist. The effect of these clean-cut and sloping tree-tops, so evenly done that not a twig obtrudes beyond the ordained angle, is weird, and adds to, rather than detracts from, the elfish impression irresistibly forced upon one when wandering in these Finevara woods.

New Quay has long been famous all over Ireland for its oysters under the name of "Red Banks." Many a shop in Dublin displays the attraction, "Red Bank Oysters Sold Here," which has no account with the Burren Fisheries, Limited. The frequency of the fraud, however, is the best testimony real Burren natives could have. Oysters galore—large, clean, absolutely free from the very faintest suspicion of any typhoid or other noxious germs or bacteria, are the toothsome molluscs of the Burren beds. They are typical of the perfect Cæsar's



Wind-swept Trees and Stone Wall, New Quay, co. Clare.

wife. No contaminating stream is within many miles of them; no sewerage of even the faintest description or odour molests them; no decaying animal or vegetable matter ever comes near these most scrupulously-tended and watched-over depositories. This is good news for the oyster gourmand—and there are many of them, and many that would be. The gourmet also may eat Burren oysters to satiety without a moment's uneasiness, without a thought of doctors, medicine bottles, cemetery location, or testamentary documents.

A glance at the detailed map of the west coast of co. Clare shews that the sea there runs into the land in many Norwegian fiord-like inlets. At the tip of one of these fingers of the Atlantic Ocean, in the midst of charming scenery, lie the oyster beds.

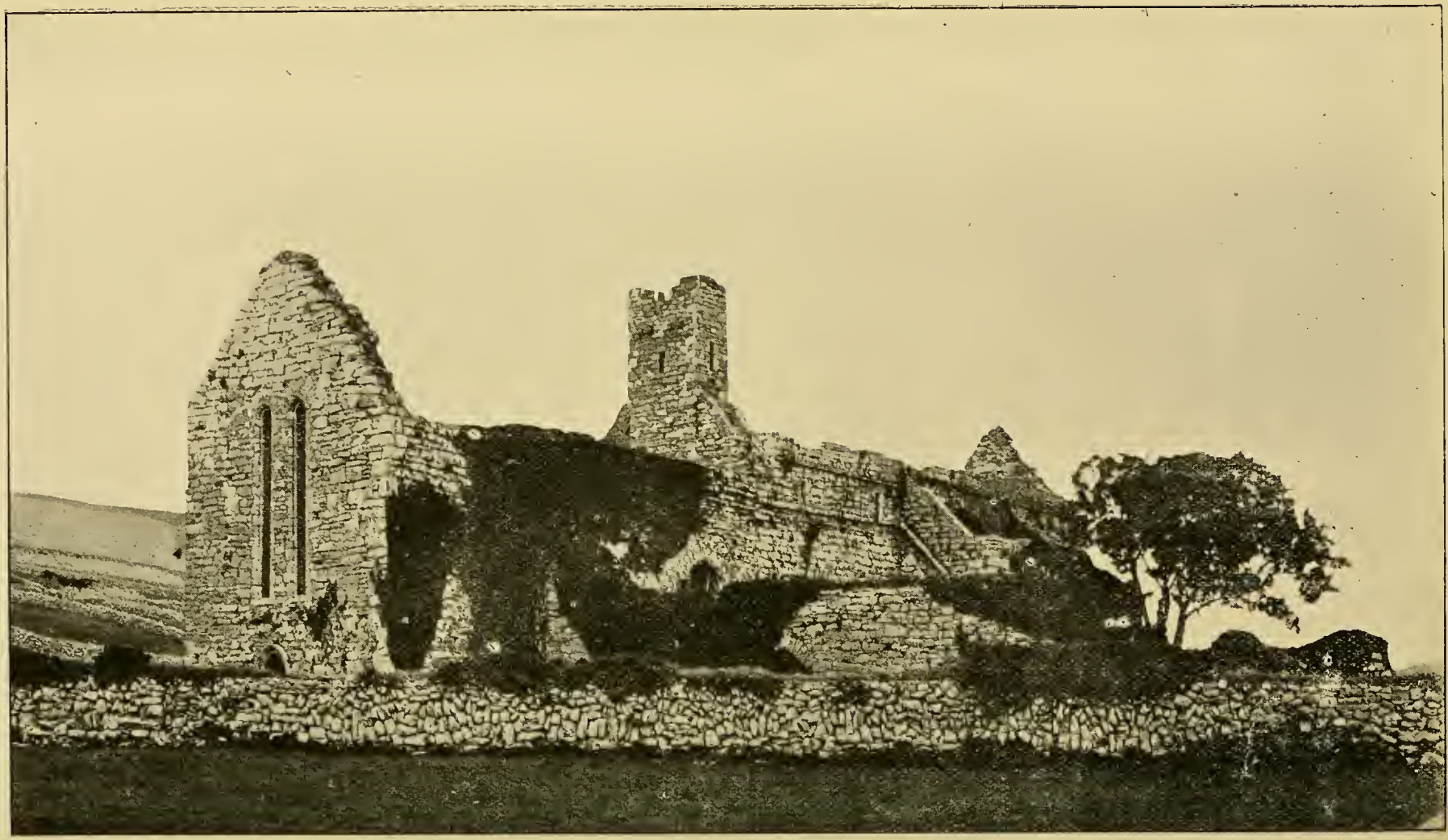
A zinc shed, unpicturesque, but useful, is the only building on the spot, with the exception of a watchman's hut on the other side of the sea inlet, where the oysters live. This strikingly out-of-place structure, in such beautiful surroundings, is the factory, if such a term be permissible, whence the boxed or "sacked" oysters issue for public consumption. The two or three boats of the company bring the oysters to the shed from the neighbouring beds, and they are there picked, sorted, and boxed. In order to prevent mistakes in counting them, and to counteract any weakness in the local mental arithmetic on the part of the peasants who look after the beds, the local manager of the Burren Fisheries, Limited, who shewed the writer over the beds, has adopted a piece of board divided into twenty-five squares, five in a row, each division just large enough to hold an oyster in its shell.

Any highly uneducated person can place an oyster in each division, and it takes the minimum of mental effort to understand that four of these boards, when each division has an oyster placed upon it, make up the hundred so associated by long custom with this particular industry.



Monument of hewn, unmortared stones, on a mound close to the sea, New Quay, co. Clare.

This simple but effective arrangement allows orders to be rapidly and correctly filled, and it has also the advantage that the manager can at any moment cast his eye over all the oysters being sent out.



Corcomroe Abbey, co. Clare.

Quite close to the shore, and adjoining almost the little landing-stage where the ferry-boat lands the one or two stray passengers a day which cross this arm of the sea over the oyster beds, is a conspicuous stone monument standing up in notable solitude on the summit of an earth mound. It is made of hewn stones, uncemented, and is of considerable height. Why it was erected, and when, I have been unable to find out. It looks old. Some told me it covered the body of a saint, some of a king. There it is, and if there be any authentic history attached to it perhaps it may be forthcoming. Such an elaborate monument, in so out-of-the-way position, must have had some *raison d'être.*

There are an abundance of interesting places to visit within easy walking and driving distance of New Quay.

Fairy rings abound—some of marvellous perfection. Ruined castles in romantic situations are not uncommon. The fern collector has here a perfect paradise, and the lepidopterist can find sufficient exercise and interest to satisfy a summer stay. The geologist has full scope for his imagination and theory buildings. The antiquarian can simply revel.

Corcomroe Abbey, one of the finest ruins in Ireland, is within walking distance. Nestling in a lovely valley with hills all around, it is just the place for picnics, and contains one feature of unique interest. A side road leads close up to the Abbey, at the entrance to which is a picturesque stile. But if the Abbey be approached from New Quay, the best way is to leave the main road to Ballyvaughan, just past the Roman Catholic Chapel, and walk straight up the

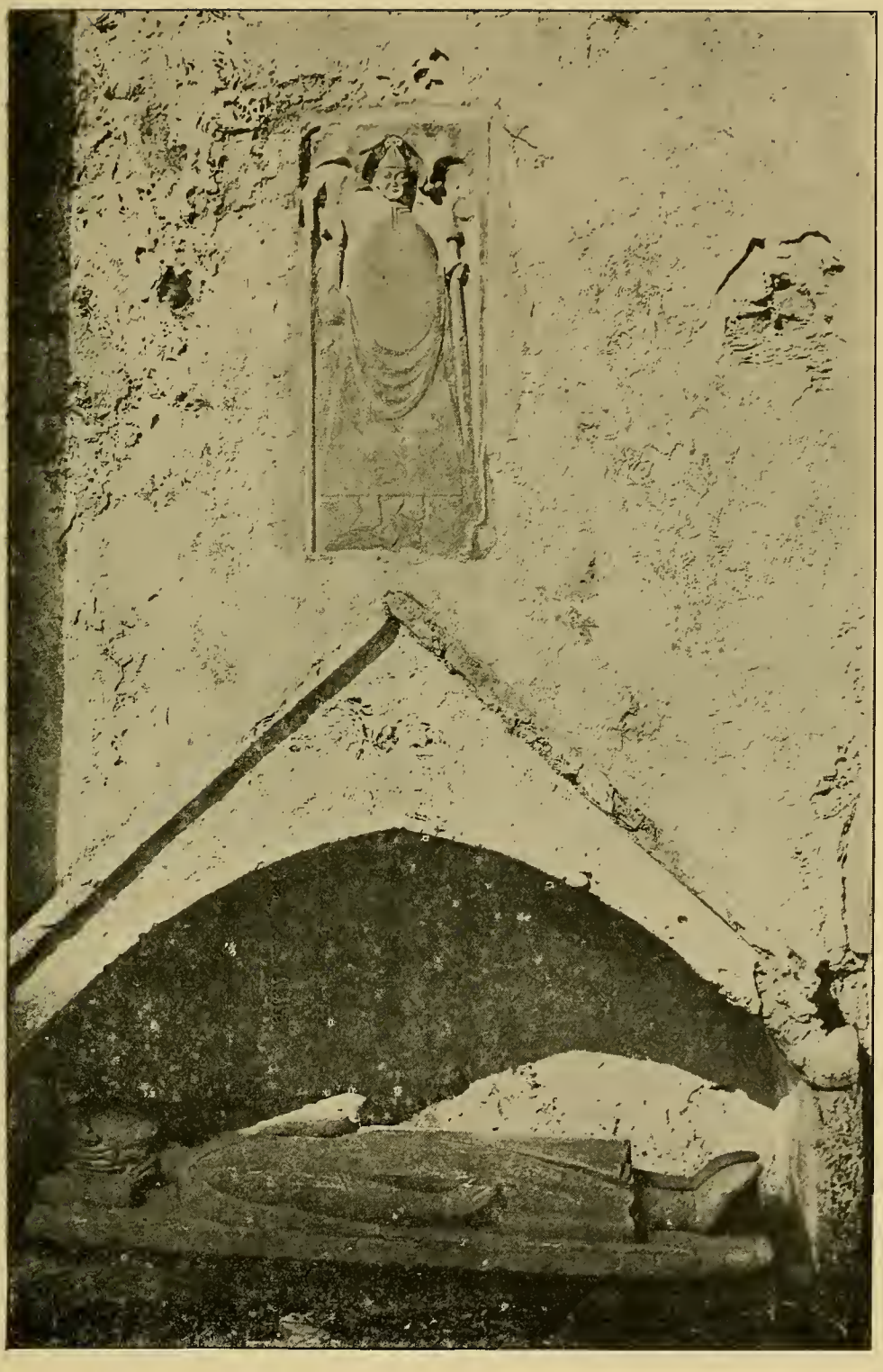
hill, coming down upon the ruins on the other side in the valley.

Connor O'Brien, an ancient King of Ireland, was slain in battle near the Abbey in 1267, and was buried beside the High Altar. A recumbent life-size figure of the monarch in full dress was carved and placed over his remains, and it is from this that we are able to reconstruct



The Stile at entrance to Corcomroe Abbey, co. Clare.

the dress and manner of wearing the hair of princes of that period. It seems they affected beards of the Vandyke type, but shaved the upper lip, and as the hair was worn long, the effect would in these days be considered singular. Above the King higher up on the wall is the effigy of an Abbot in the act of blessing.



Corcomroe Abbey. The recumbent figure is of King Connor O'Brien.

Formerly Corcomroe Abbey must have been of vast extent. Practically only the ruins of the church remain. A beautiful spring of water within the precincts, now a magnificent water-cress bed, suggests a series of trout ponds in the days of old.

On the seaway from New Quay to Galway, about two miles distant from the former, is a low-lying large rock,



Stone Stile near Corcomroe Abbey, co. Clare.

called "Deer Island," whereon myriads of sea-fowl breed and have their being.

The gulls, cormorants, oyster-catchers, and others of marine habits fly up in clouds with an indescribable babel of bird cries when one lands there, and the eggs and young birds on the ground are thick and crave wary

walking. Singularly enough the gulls I found were all lodging at one end of the island, and do not associate with



Ruined Castle near Corcomroe Abbey, co. Clare.

the cormorants, whose abode is at the other end. Caste distinctions are by no means confined to the human species.

But enough has been said to shew that a visit to this part of Co. Clare may have attractions for the tired brain-worker, the health-seeker, and others on only pleasure bent.

For sea fishers, New Quay cannot be recommended. At one spot only in a racing tide-way, near an old ruined castle, is there anything in the nature of sport. There, rod-fishing, I have caught some large pollack.

The sea fishing in the bay must be from Galway boats —the sea is too rough for canoes—and mackerel on hand lines with heavy sinkers is the prevalent sport, which as everyone knows is very little sport indeed.

There being no trout streams near, in this extraordinary stony country, the angler will not go to New Quay *quâ* angler.

CHAPTER XV.

A County Clare Sylvan Mystery.

I had been through the woods on one or two occasions pursuing the usual tracks among the gnarled trunks of the birch-trees, the moss and ivy-clad pillars of the beeches, and in and out between the pine trunks, and had not noticed it. I had picnicked on the sunlit oases in the umbrageous depths "where woods are a-tremble, with rifts atween," using lichen-clad outcrop blocks of limestone for tables and seats, and nothing unusual had struck my eye.

But one evening, chancing in the course of a ramble to glance in another direction, I became instantly conscious that before me stood an object of antiquarian interest, the like of which I had never before come across. I had to step some twenty paces from the rude pathway, among the undergrowth of ferns and seedling trees before reaching it. Then I saw what looked like the entrance to three caves all in a row on a level with the ground.

Each entrance was about four feet high, and composed of a triangle of large, heavy, calcareous limestone blocks, the apices being at the top.

On stooping and looking in, I found that each cave ran into the massive mound of superimposed earth and stones some twenty feet, the whole length of this cave or passage being formed of stones placed close together triangularly, just as were those visible at and forming the mouth.



The Sylvan Mystery, New Quay, co. Clare.

A few large blocks of stone scattered about amongst the ferns, ivy, and rank, long grass near the entrance, shewed that probably they had been used as temporary doors to the strange triangular caverns.

These three caves were separated by about four feet of solid stones, and they did not communicate with one another. The mound above was some fifteen or sixteen feet high, and trees, with trunks of considerable thickness, found there a habitation.

A good many score of years it must have taken those trees to grow.

I crawled into one of the caves and searched for bones. Might these curious, long, obviously artificial caves have not been the final resting-place for former inhabitants of that part of the country, who joined the majority in perhaps the stone or bronze period?

I had in other countries seen caves not unlike them, with mounds, above which were the sepulchres of a departed race.

On the Isleta of Gran Canaria I had unearthed the giant skeletons of extinct Gaunches from resting-places reminiscent of what was now before me. But I found not a vestige of bone or even bone-earth. No flint implements; no indication of the bronze or iron period of human history could I find to assist my lucubrations. There was no evidence of neolithic times, certainly not of palæolithic. And yet the antiquity of the mound and its underlying caves was obvious.

What could the curious tri-cave arrangement signify? Had a symbolic signification once been associated with it? I knew not. I was puzzled.

My knowledge of such things in other countries and some personal intimacy with the troglodyte dwellings of Africa availed not.

An acquaintance with Cuevas del Provecho and Artenara afforded me no clue. If they had been used not for burial purposes but for living in, the posture necessitated by their shape suggested only nocturnal and most uncomfortable occupancy.

What manner of man would inhabit such a dwelling merely as a night lodger, lying stretched out full length and crawling in and out?

Did a species of local Fakir exist formerly in Ireland who, as a means of mortifying the flesh, chose this singular cramped and attenuated place of abode? Hermits, I know, used to dwell "in moss-brankt dells which the sunbeams flatter," and on desert lake-islands in Ireland as elsewhere, but their places of residence that I have seen were all Ritz hotels to this third-rate Fonda. Even if you could imagine *one* extraordinary saint thus located, it would be ludicrous to suggest three, all in a row, and all lying stretched out full length!

No, the more one thought over the structure and compared it with what one had seen and read of hermits, fakirs, and such like oddities, the more mysterious did the mound and its triple caves appear.

The nephew of the owner of the wood was asked if he possessed a key to the secret. His surprising answer was that he did not know what we were talking about, and yet he had known those woods intimately from his youth up. When taken to view the discovery his surprise was intense, his bewilderment great, his explanation—none.

The owner was actually next applied to with just the same result. The very existence of the phenomenon had not been ever noticed by either.

It seemed that I should have to leave Ireland without solving the mystery, and a vista of a paper before the British Association began to crystallize into a concrete form.

Before, however, rashly putting on paper any account or theory for a scientific or learned antiquarian society, I thought I would ask, as a humble seeker after truth, the oldest inhabitant of the neighbourhood. At last I came across an old, old man, of quite uncertain date—like many things in the British Museum. He patiently listened to my account of the mystery of the wood. When I had got into his ancient head the simplicity of my description he at once answered :—

"Why, many, many years ago, so I have heard my father say his father told him, this part of the country was owned by a great fox-hunting squire, and in order that he might never be at a loss for a fox to give the hounds and horses a day's sport, he used always to keep three in stock in those caves, which he had made strong and solid with heavy stones, and a lot of earth on top to keep the animals down so that they could not possibly bite or scratch their way out."

The solution was found, but the antiquarian societies have lost a most interesting discussion.

And this curious old-time and old-fashioned Store House for Foxes is situated in the woods at New Quay, County Clare.

CHAPTER XVI.

Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare—The Spa—The Waters—Moher Cliffs.

Most spas have pasts. Some have great pasts, illustrious or otherwise. Bath, for instance, has a past lost in the dim, prehistorical obscurity of Bladud and swine. The past is to many spas an unmitigated nuisance. It requires a lot of living up to—or living down. People are so apt to expect much of the present when they consider magnificent pasts. Now Lisdoonvarna is in a happy position. It has practically no past.

A gentleman, not so very old, a canon of the Roman Catholic Church, whom I met on the spot, told me that he remembered the place forty years ago when it possessed only one hotel. Now it has many.

Lisdoonvarna has an active present—vigorous, healthy, and yet simple. She looks forward hopefully to a grand future. Her prognostications are not unlikely to be realised, and for several reasons.

In Ireland Lisdoonvarna has up to the present no real competitor. She is situated in a lovely position. She has interesting surroundings—antiquarian, botanical, geological. She is lavishly endowed with strong, marvellously health-giving, natural mineral waters, and, not least by any means, she possesses an air of consequence.

To take the last first. A good air is, to a maiden, of importance. To Lisdoonvarna the air is of very great importance. It is vital. It is a rich endowment. It is



Lisdoonvarna, the Spa.

probably, if she only knew it, her most valuable asset. It is a little gold-mine she has not yet properly worked. It is a happy, smile-making, wrinkle-obliterating, invigo-

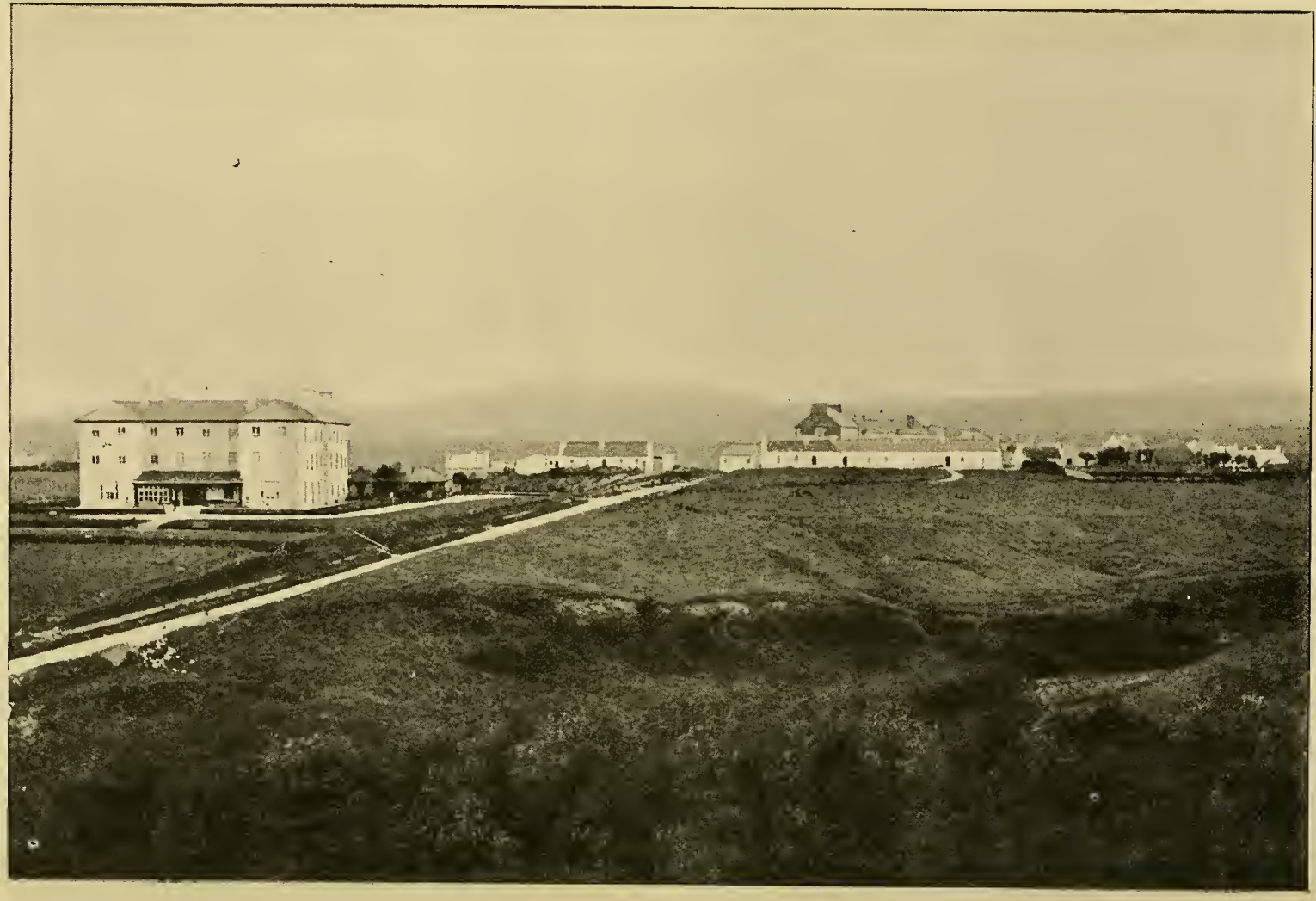
rating, appetising, health-laden air—a rare mixture of antiseptic bog air, ozonic Atlantic sea air (for that ocean is only three miles distant), and balmy, land-borne air, for Lisdoonvarna lies 600 feet above sea-level. This predominant feature of Lisdoonvarna is scarcely realised by the visitors increasingly flocking to drink and to bathe in its mineral waters. And then, ladies, for complexions!—abolish beauty doctors and try Lisdoonvarna. Still, the salubriousness of the spot does undoubtedly attract some health-seekers, who yearly revisit the place on this account alone, without troubling the waters either for internal or external application.

I met a surprising number of persons who told me they annually went there to recruit and had done so for six, ten, even forty years. Habit may of course account for this somewhat unusual faithfulness, but not altogether. Health-seekers, as a class, are, in this respect, notoriously fickle.

I made particular enquiries as to cures. These two, which I verified by evidence collected in different quarters where collusion was impossible, are worth mentioning.

One gentleman from Kilkenny arrived walking by the aid of two sticks. He had twelve baths in the Gowlan (sulphur) water at a temperature of 102° F., and left stickless.

Another patient, from Leitrim, a week before I was there, had just walked away from the place. He had arrived on crutches a cripple from rheumatism. His happy result was obtained by eleven baths at the Gowlan spring at the temperature of 102° F. A doctor was also obtaining much relief when I was there from some liver



Lisdoonvarna—Distant View.

Lisdoonvarna—Bridge at the Spa.

disease by treating himself to baths at 110° F. The late Dr. Faussett recorded a case of most obstinate eczema which was greatly benefited by the sulphurous water. Harrogate had been twice visited in vain, and low diet, and every variety of internal and external remedies prescribed by leading physicians in London and Dublin had failed.

The water of the Gowlan spring contains free sulphuretted hydrogen—the gas given off by "shop" eggs—hence the smell is not pleasant; but the drinkers, curiously enough, soon get so accustomed to the aroma that they fail to notice it. The oxydised sulphur exists entirely combined with hydrogen. The water contains also magnesia and traces of lithia. Chronic gout and rheumatism, dyspepsia, skin affections, and various forms of chlorosis and of anæmia are the kind of cases which benefit by the internal and external use of Lisdoonvarna waters.

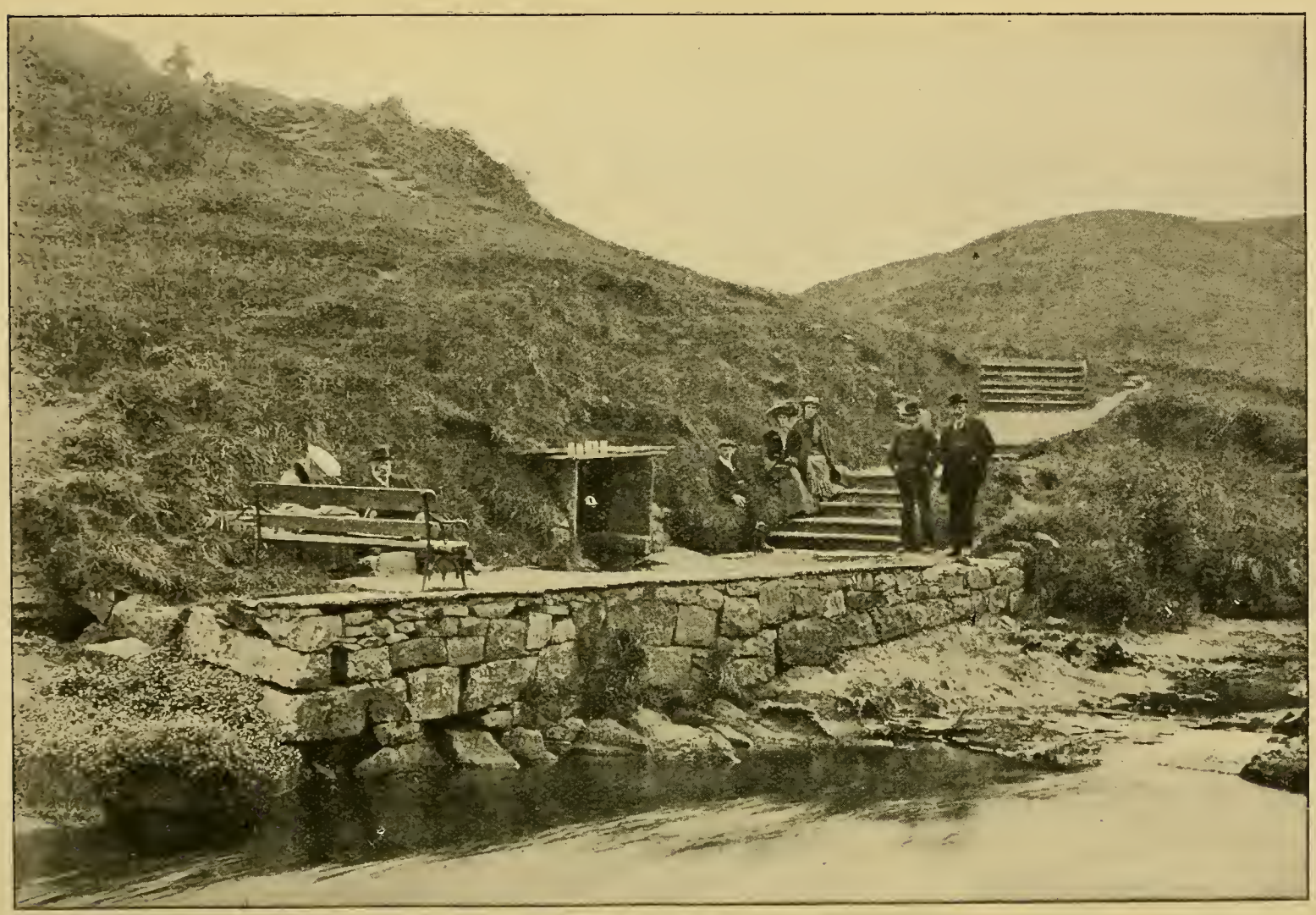
Not unlikely the gout successes of the water may be partly due to the lithia, and who knows whether radium may not be present? At Royat, that favourite resort for the chronic gouty, lithia is considered the active remedial agent in the water, so there is some analogy for making the suggestion.

The baths at the Spa, over the Gowlan source, are of three ages. The oldest were erected some thirty years ago, and so well and strongly was the heating apparatus then made, that even to this day it is most efficacious. Fifteen years ago another set of baths was constructed, and in 1904 the newest were opened. These comprise the ordinary reclining baths as well as shower and needle.

Each bath has two dressing rooms, one on either side, furnished with solid washable india-rubber mats, tiled floors and walls, the woodwork being neat pine simply polished. The prices are moderate, viz., 1*s.* 6*d.*, 1*s.*, and 9*d.*

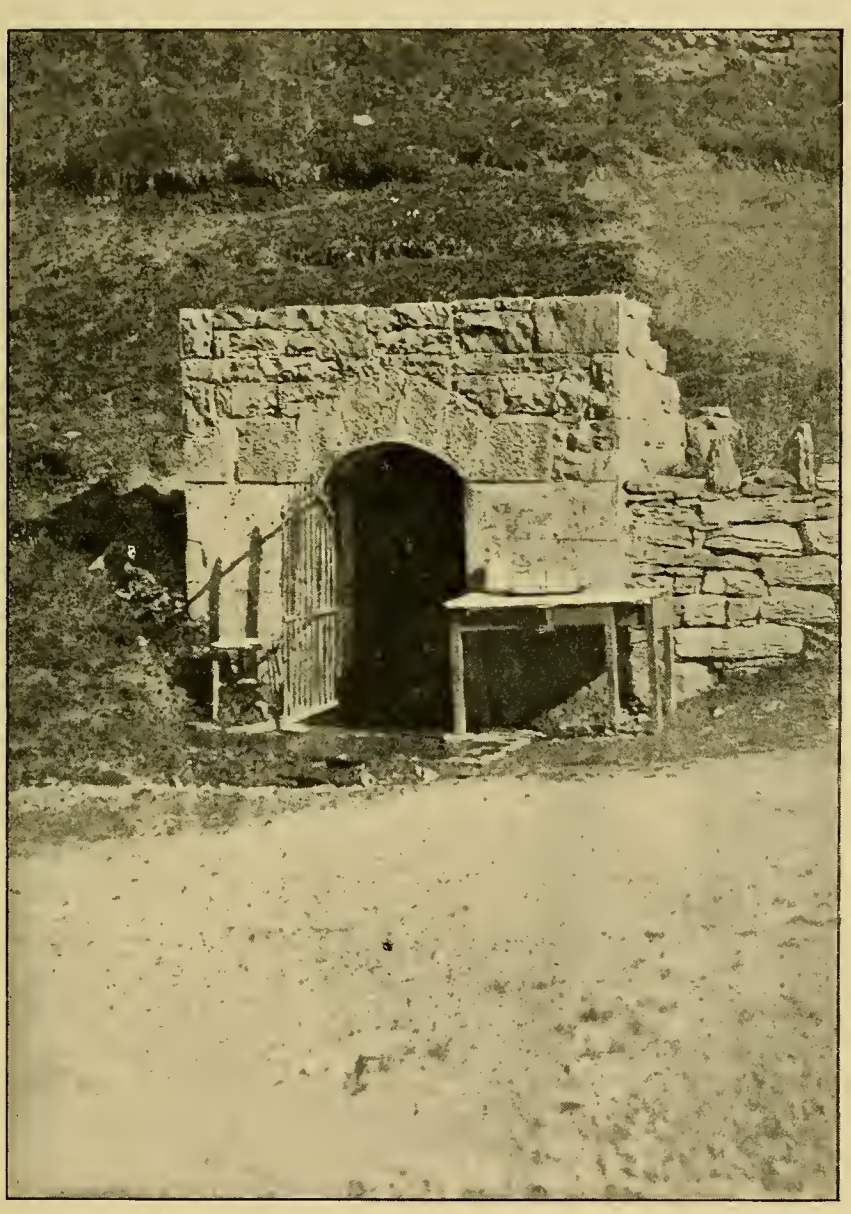
The Sulphur Spa, or Gowlan, is situated quite close to the chief hotels, at the fork of the Gowlan river and close to the picturesque bridge over it. The ground has been planted, winding walks have been constructed in the ravine, and comfortable public seats placed in inviting nooks. Plenty of seats, at intervals sufficiently short that the wayfaring man or woman need never fear a walk, is a pleasing idiosyncrasy of Lisdoonvarna. These are very wisely to be found not only in the actual precincts of the town, but are carried into the highways and byways for a considerable area round the place. Many are cunningly placed so that pleasing and surprising views await the sitter.

But besides the Gowlan spring, where is the Spa proper, Lisdoonvarna possesses other springs. Nature is sometimes lavish. Another sulphur spring is one of the "Twins." These are two springs situated close to the Kilmoon stream, about a quarter of a mile west of the town by the eastern end of the Church of Ireland Church. The higher spring is an iron one, the lower sulphur. A few yards only separate the two. The sulphur is so predominant in the lower spring that the ground is covered with the characteristic whitish yellow deposit, and the smell of H_2S—egg gas, as we may call it—is obvious to even the unheeding. The little ravine, on whose bank these two quite distinct health gifts of Nature reside, is descended by a series of wide, low steps, and the spot is



Lisdoonvarna: One of the "Twins" (Sulphur Well). The Well is in centre of photograph, with Glasses for drinking the Water above it.

particularly pretty and interesting. The "Twins" are certainly a curiosity. Unlike most twins, they are very different to one another.



Lisdoonvarna, Rathbaun Well.

Then, some fifty yards only from the main cross roads in the town, on the right hand side, in a small *cul de sac*.

are the Magnesian and the Rathbaun Wells. The chalybeates are remarkably pure, and contain ·39, ·28, ·23 of carbonate of iron, quite equal in strength to those of Tunbridge Wells.

The charge for drinking the waters is for the whole length of stay only 1*s.* 6*d.*, a cost which compares most favourably with such favourite resorts as Harrogate, Buxton, or Bath.

The place is managed by a committee elected by the householders and ratepayers, and the resident physicians are Dr. F. B. Forster and Dr. O'Sullivan We strongly recommend visitors in their own interests to consult one or other of them before attempting a course of waters. They are most attentive and courteous, and keenly solicitous that visitors derive benefit from their sojourn.

I can quite imagine that, without proper advice, the indiscriminate use of such powerful waters might be actually harmful.

Lisdoonvarna has no railway station at present. It seems absurd that a place with such wonderful waters and surrounding attractions should be still so out of the world. Many, knowing the place, say that is the very reason they like to go there.

Certainly the want of close railway attachment tends to keep off cheap trippers and makes the society much more companionable and friendly.

It is a good place to make acquaintances. The free and easy style, now pervading, of speaking and exchanging remarks freely over the *table d'hôte*, and the almost daily dances or *impromptu* concerts got up at one

hotel or another, tend to make the recollections of a visit to Lisdoonvarna always pleasant.

> "Bright-eyed maidens young and fair,
> Whose constitutions—more's the pity—
> Seem to need some slight repair,
> Come here from many a town and city.
> Pale-faced youths and men whose years
> Should put them past such foolish notions,
> Gazing on the gentle dears,
> Give way to soft and sweet emotions!
> Oh! my Lisdoonvarna dear,
> My life-reviving Lisdoonvarna,
> Men get health, that's more than wealth,
> But lose their hearts at Lisdoonvarna."

Yes, we saw many attractive faces at Lisdoonvarna, but where do you not in Ireland?

Situated in County Clare, Lisdoonvarna lies on a tract of open country with low hills in the neighbourhood. They are of limestone, and small streams have burrowed among the rocks, producing charming little deep ravines. The botanist will find much material here for thought and collection. Among plants which will attract the scientific eye are *Pinguicula lusitanica*, *Pinguicula vulgaris*—those two extraordinary insect-eating plants upon which Darwin wrote a book, and which are popularly known as butterworts, because they prevent the setting or turning of milk—*Gentia verna*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Geranium Sanguineum*, *Arbutus uva Ursi*, *Osmunda regalis*—the royal flowering fern, *Adiantum caplilus Veneris*, *Habenaria albida*—a rare and pretty orchid found over the shale in the ravines—and *Cystopteris fragilis*, the bladder fern. The juniper, ground pine, woodbine, white saxifrage, flowering rush, stone bramble, and the wild strawberry

are to be found in the mountainous parts, and the samphire—a sea cabbage, an excellent vegetable—and Sea Matweed on the coast.

There are three routes by which to reach the place: by the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, from Broadstone Station, and the West Clare Railway to Ennistymon; thence by public long-car—seven miles—to Lisdoonvarna. The return fare from Broadstone to Ennistymon is 24*s.* 4*d.*; first class, 50*s.* 1*d.*; and the long-car fare from Ennistymon to Lisdoonvarna 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*

Or, by the Great Southern and Western Railway from Kingsbridge, and West Clare Railway to Ennistymon, and thence by car.

Or from Broadstone Station at Dublin to Galway, and thence by a little steamer which plies (during the summer months only) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The passage across Galway Bay by this latter route takes an hour and a half, and at Ballyvaughan, where the steamer lands passengers, long-cars convey the visitors to Lisdoonvarna—seven miles.

This route is probably the most interesting. On nearing the County Clare side of Galway Bay the little seaside place of New Quay is discerned, and two Martello towers make breaks in long spits of land.

These are not so called after any inventor, as is often supposed. The name is taken from the Italian towns on the shores of the Mediterranean, when piracy was common there. If a pirate ship was seen approaching, a warning to the neighbourhood was given by striking on a large bell with a "hammer"—"martello." Hence these towns were called "*torri da*

martello." All round a good part of the English, as well as Irish coasts they are still to be seen—"monuments of the wisdom of Pitt and Dundas and Perceval!" as William Cobbett satirically dubbed them. Cannons *were* to be fired from the tops of these, in order to defend the country against the French Jacobins. But no guns were ever even cast for most of them. The towers are simply colossal monuments of idiotic waste of money, for even if they had been armed they never would have prevented an invasion. William Cobbett says they each cost the country some thousands. Within the last few years some of them have been sold for dwelling-houses, others for stabling. Most of them are situated close to the shore, commanding good views, and many are placed within sight of one another. It is only right to say that quite another origin of the name Martello appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of January 15th, 1848, where it is said the Government adopted this form of defence from the Tower of *Martella* or Martle Bay in Corsica. That tower offered such good resistance to the British forces under Lord Hood and General Dundas in 1794 that the Ministry adopted similar structures to be erected on such parts of the coast as seemed to be most assailable.

The poet Campbell truly summed up their value to this country in keeping off invaders:—

> "Britannia needs no bulwarks,
> No towers along the steep;
> Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
> Her home is on the deep."

Not long after leaving Ballyvaughan the road to

Lisdoonvarna is laid up the end of a valley, like the lash of a whip, and one can look down at the windings beneath and far away in the distance over the valley just passed through and Galway Bay beyond. In position, view, and construction, this well-engineered road—called "The Corkscrew Hill"—reminds one forcibly of the Stalheimscleft in Norway, and of the road below the Devil's Bridge at Andermatt in Switzerland. Backward and forward it winds, and so limited is the space at the end of the valley down the almost precipitous slope that the turns are frequent and, owing to the abruptness of the descent, sharp. Arriving at the top, the broad Atlantic is soon visible, and the smoke of Lahinch betokens that town's position. And then the life-giving air of Lisdoonvarna becomes apparent, like nectar in one's system.



Corkscrew Hill, near Lisdoonvarna.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lisdoonvarna's Surroundings—The Spectacle Bridge—Kilfenora.

The word "Lisdoonvarna" has a puzzling physiognomy. It has a sweet, feminine, pretty appearance, and can be pronounced with a soft mellow sound. But appearances here are, as often, deceptive. In reality it has nothing to do with the fair sex. No sweet colleen's appellation is it, but simple "gapped fort," whatever that may mean.

The townland containing such a fort or castle lies to the south-west of the village of Rathbaun, and the townland of Gowlaun, or Gowlan, in which the springs are situated, goes colloquially by the name of Lisdoonvarna. It is situated in the barony of Burren, union of Ballyvaughan, and in the county of Clare. Such is the dry local topography.

A writer more than 250 years ago (General Ludlow) wrote: "The barony of Burren is a country in which there is not water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang a man, nor earth enough to bury him, which last is so scarce that the inhabitants steal it from one another; and yet their cattle are very fat, for the grass, growing in tufts, each about two feet square, between the rocks is very sweet and nourishing." All of which is not a bad or

much exaggerated description of this part of Ireland to-day.

The place is so out of the world that it has been passed by on the other side by the public. A famous Guide to Ireland, in its edition of 1857, makes no mention of it in the text, and also ignores it in the map. But the light of Lisdoonvarna has now blazed up. It is not made to be hidden under a bushel. The inhabitants are awaking from slumber and beginning to realise the value of their mineral waters and fine air as a vast amount of capital lying idle at their doors, and returning up to the present little or no interest.

The scenery around and the objects of interest in the immediate vicinity will always mutely urge Lisdoonvarna's claims for recognition and admiration. As the railways offer more and increased facilities for the advent of travellers, the claims of the "gapped fort" for classification among the leading health resorts of this country will become more urgent.

The population, according to the last census, is only 171, but the place has accommodation for quite 2000 guests, and during the season here—at present a summer one chiefly, though every effort is being made to extend, and already with some success—every bed is occupied. In a few years' time there is every appearance that that accommodation will be multiplied by four, six, or may be even ten.

Every spa, like every University town, has its grind. At Cambridge it is the Trumpington grind; at Lisdoonvarna it is the Bog Road grind. Whichever way you take the circuitous walk the curious Spectacle Bridge has to



Spectacle Bridge.

be passed over. This is a high structure spanning a deep ravine, with an eye like an Ogre's set right in the forehead. To view the curious arch properly and take in its beauty a path by the side nearest Lisdoonvarna must be descended. Our photograph is taken from the bottom of this dell.

But the two great sights of Lisdoonvarna are the Moher Cliffs, seven miles to the south-west, and the old—very old—antiquities at Kilfenora, five miles to the south-east.

The lofty, sheer precipices of Moher are about 680, or, some say, 700 feet high, and, with the wild Atlantic Ocean rolling in at their base, are unquestionably awe-inspiring. Myriads, literally, of sea wild-fowl here have their abiding place. When they rise in thick clouds it is a sight to be remembered. The islands of Arran are within ten miles of the mainland, and can be visited from Galway by a steamer, which in the summer crosses about three times a week.

The five miles' drive or walk to Kilfenora from Lisdoonvarna is of the ordinary description, through rather good agricultural land.

The place itself is now small, of the usual Irish one-street type, with thatched cottages or cabins. Formerly it was clearly of much more importance—a separate diocese, but since 1752 it has been united to that of Killaloe.

The church of Kilfenora is probably the oldest in Ireland. It was formerly the Cathedral of St. Fachnan. The roofed-in part is now a small building, consisting of nave and choir, with a massive tower or belfry, partly in

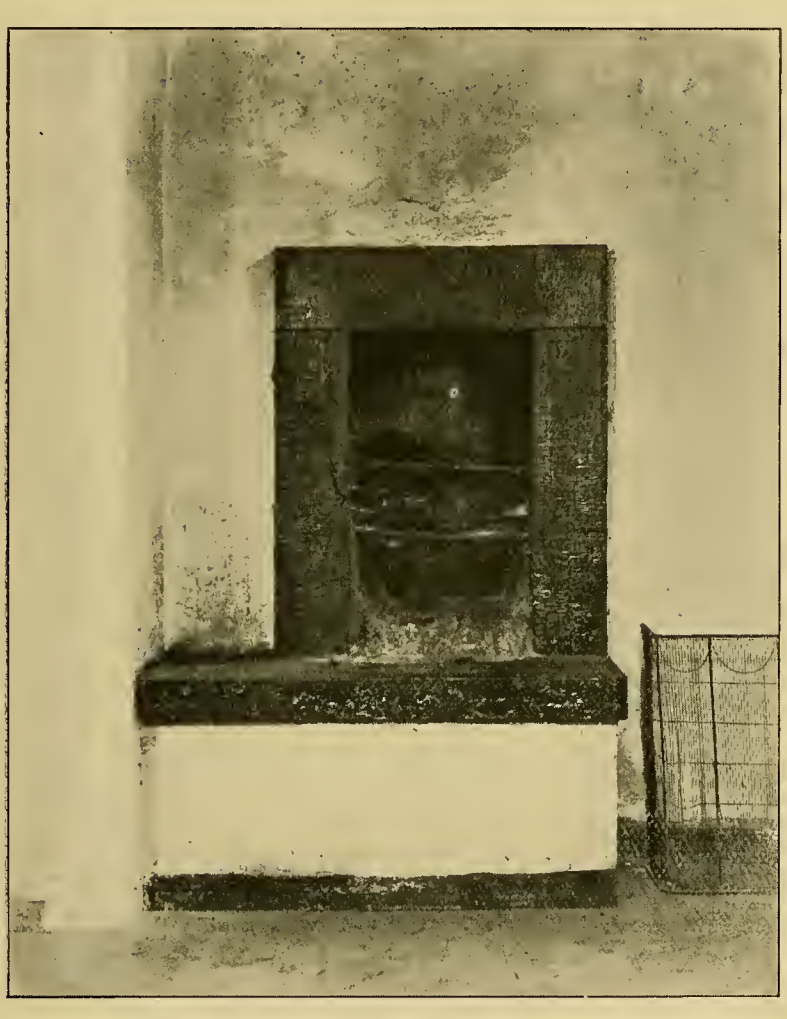
ruins. It measures some sixty-seven feet by about twenty-one feet. This portion is used as a place of worship by



Kilfenora Church, near Lisdoonvarna.

the Church of Ireland. The façade as seen from the approach is uncommon.

The walled-in graveyard around the edifice is full of graves, and among them are the heads of three undoubtedly ancient Irish crosses, shewing a wealth of Celtic tracery, which at some quite modern date must

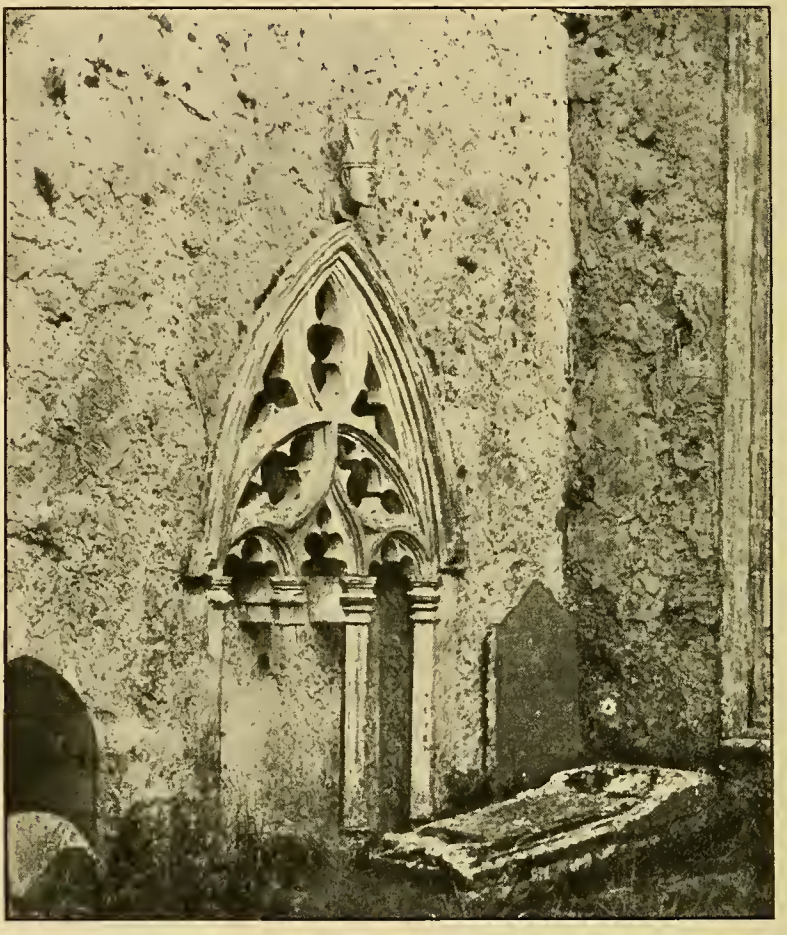


Fire-place in the Church, Kilfenora.

have been purloined to make private headstones. It is a pity these are not unearthed and placed in the open where they can be seen.

An old, dilapidated bit of stone twisty staircase

leads to the remains of what was once the belfry. On the floor the only bell I saw was a broken one bearing the raised inscription: "Doyle, Limerick, 1821." A fine old stone font is to be seen near the door of the church on



A nook in Kilfenora Church.

the inside, the tracery on which shews it to be of very early and uncertain date.

A feature of this curious church, constructed out of part of an old cathedral, is the heating arrangement. This is primitive, but effective. It consists of two fire-

places, both on the same wall—one near the east window, one near the entrance. They are curiously placed some three feet from the floor, and are constructed for "turf" or peat burning. They arrest the eye at once on entering as being quaint and unusual.

The choir of the ancient edifice is roofless, and contains a fine east window quite twenty feet high, of three lights with round-headed arches. In the north wall is a very fine screened recess, the head of which is embellished with beautiful cusped tracery. There are an ambry and double piscina in the south wall. There is also a monument in the church, with an effigy supposed to be that of the founder, St. Fachnan.

In the middle of a meadow, in a slight knoll, within fifty yards of the old church, stands, slightly out of the perpendicular, an ancient Celtic cross with beautiful tracery of the regular old Irish description, and which has also, on the side facing the sacred edifice, a crude representation of the Crucifixion. This cross is thirteen feet high, and alone repays a visit to Kilfenora. Near it there is a holy well.

At Lisdoonvarna the limestone formation—calcareous limestone—joins hands with the shale series of rocks. In no other part of Ireland is the junction so beautifully exhibited and on such a large scale. In many of the picturesque ravines you can walk for miles in dry weather, having beneath your feet limestone, and on either side perpendicular walls of shale.

The peculiar concretions here formed so exactly resemble the backs of tortoises that even naturalists have been deceived. Some of them have been embedded in the

wall on the way to the spa, just past the Imperial Hotel, where they very considerably puzzle the unknowing.

Another interesting drive from Lisdoonvarna can be made by taking the road to Ballynalackan Castle—a ruin



Old Celtic Cross, Kilfenora.

very picturesquely perched on a precipitous ledge of rocks—and round by Black Head, the south-west guardian of the entrance to Galway Bay.

Lisdoonvarna is a very favourite resort for the dignitaries and priests of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland to recruit; you see them by the dozen. If you



Ballynalackan Castle, near Lisdoonvarna.

happen to be up early in the morning you will see hundreds of the devout and clericals tramp off to Mass. If you are not up, but lie in bed, you will hear the tread

of many feet on the road below, and will wonder what is up. I did at first. It sounded like workmen going to a factory. After a time the tramp, tramp, returns. Mass is over, the population returns to breakfast. These priests enter into the life of the place, its gaieties and amusements, and I have found them most entertaining. To many of them, coming from the wilds, Lisdoonvarna must be gay indeed—probably the oasis in the desert of the year's grind, the common task, where they meet with men similarly as well educated and on a par with themselves. To these poor Irish priests of the Roman Church Lisdoonvarna is a blessing indeed. They appreciate its advantages.

Lisdoonvarna is well served with hotels. They are quite close to the spa, and there is not much to choose between them in the way of homely comforts. Entertainments—dances and concerts—are of daily occurrence, and the free intercourse and conversation of visitors delightful to the English tourist, who often associates a hotel at a spa with frigidity and stand-offishness.

Then, too, the soft, low-toned Irish brogue of the waiters and maids in the hotels is most agreeable to the wearied seeking rest and health. The care and attention to detail reminds one of such famous health resorts as Madeira, the Canary Islands, and Cairo. If you order a cup of tea early in the morning you may rest assured it will be at your door to time. If you wish to visit one of the many interesting places in the neighbourhood your luncheon basket will lack nothing. These may seem small, trivial matters, but it is the little drops of water, little grains of sand, which make the mighty

ocean and the pleasant land, and it is the apparently unimportant details of hotel life that build up their reputation.

"Long may Lisdoonvarna thrive,
And all its springs continue flowing,
And those who come there half alive
Be gay and hearty when they're going!
For me—I'll often banish care
With memories of the social graces,
The wit, the worth I've met with there,
'Midst genial hearts and friendly faces."*

* T. D. Sullivan.

PART III.

COUNTY SLIGO.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Some Irish Stiles and their Surroundings: Inniscrone (Co. Sligo).

THE more one studies Irish stiles the more baffling does the pursuit become. Preconceived ideas, derived from analogy, history of similar structures, observation, common knowledge, and even common sense—in short, all previously formulated theories, should be discarded when approaching the investigation of this entrancing, intricate, and absorbingly interesting Irish subject. The mind which concentrates upon the matter should be a blank, devoid of all deliberate intention—a simple child-like brain ready to receive impressions without questioning, to initiate nothing.

In the first place, there are no common stiles in Ireland. They are all uncommon—very. They turn up in the wrong places. In the right places where, from ignorant

preconceived ideas, they should be, they are not. Where they are wanted you do not find them. Where you find them they are clearly not needed by you or any one else. Many theories can be advanced to account for the phenomena of Irish stiles, but no one hard and fast explanation meets and smooths away their varied idiosyncrasies. Profound thinkers may suggest they exist to aid the contemplative faculties, to stimulate imagination, or even to arouse poetic sentiments or prosaic objurgations. The superficial and heedless may actually advance the rash opinion that Irish stiles are for use, and, to sustain such a ridiculous hypothesis, may draw comparisons between them and their English *confrères*. Comparisons are, as usual, odious. To thus degrade the Irish representatives of the order is simply another injustice to Ireland—so let us hear no more of such nonsense. Take, for example, this stile at the ideally perfect seaside resort for families with children—Inniscrone, some seven healthy, breezy miles north of Ballina, on the east side of the deep intrusion there of the Atlantic into Ireland. You can leave London at night and *viâ* the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland arrive at Ballina next day at noon. And it is not an expensive journey. At any rate the cheapness of living at Inniscrone, when you get there, compensates fully for the getting. The return tourist tickets from London, available for two months, are 60*s*. third-class with second-class cabin—quite good enough for even the fastidious—on board the Kingstown mail boats. The second-class return is 87*s*. 6*d*.

From Ballina a motor, or long-car, conveys the traveller to this rising seaside resort of Inniscrone,

Inishcrone, or Enniscrone, as it is indifferently and variously called and spelt.

Inniscrone is at present practically unknown. "Murray" merely mentions its existence without comment, but it will not long remain so. The place has so many advantages that the rapidly-increasing yearly rush of English tourists and health-seekers will doubtless soon find it out. It has at present the advantages of being a remarkably cheap place for the family's annual outing.

The fairy-like castellated palace close down by the sea, whose waves sweep all around it at high tide, is the feature of the shore. The childish imagination peoples it with dwarfs, dragons, and grim stories of absorbing interest. The prosaic fact is that baths of fresh water can be had there—hot 6*d.*, cold 3*d.*—and that it was thus cunningly designed by the chief owner of Inniscrone as an attraction to the place. It is certainly a model of romantic beauty and a lesson in architecture for all future builders of baths by the sea.

The sand dunes and the uninterrupted long sweep of firm sand in the wide bay are a paradise for children, and withal contain no lurking dangers for infantile precocity.

The one simple street of cottages, the old-time cottage post-office, set back at the end of a garden from the road, and the combination hotel and general shop, are all restful and pleasingly old-fashioned.

Then there are several well-preserved fairy-rings and cromlechs within a few minutes' walk, which, as guide-books say, would well repay a visit. Sea-fishers will find good sport—pollack, conger, and ling—when the sea is smooth.



The Bathing House, Inniscrone.

But there is no trout or salmon fishing near—at Lough Talt, ten miles away, there is good trout-fishing—so that the resort is more for the family and sea, rather than the fresh-water angler. While the children are safely enjoying themselves on the salubrious Inniscrone sands the elders can get many pleasant excursions around—a feature worthy of consideration when settling on the place for the annual family outing.

And then there are the stiles. A concrete wall and a cemented sloping-way for the launching of boats is the nearest approach to a harbour Inniscrone possesses. Boat Port is its name. The wall is simply a protection to break the force of the waves, and naturally ends blindly on the land side, where a grass-covered common overlooks the sea. Now a stone wall ending in nothing particular is inartistic, if not irritating. Some would have suggested a pillar to mark its termination and give a finish to its presence. Not so at Inniscrone. The Inniscrone mind when in doubt turns to stiles, and so a stile it is that ornaments the wall's impingement on the common. Of course, it could never have been built to be used, for it is difficult to imagine a sane person elaborately going up one set of awkward stone steps and down another set on the other side when a foot away he can freely walk round the wall's end. For the acrobatic performance of children in the summer playing about the common, however, it may have its uses.

Then there is another typically Irish and equally entertaining stile on the way down to the sea from the hotel—to give Mrs. Maughan's unpretentious corner shop a pretentious title. Presumably it is intended, like its

brother at Boat Port, to be ascended and descended by the wayfaring man or woman, but as immediately by its side is an extremely simple and easily passable iron-swing-gate-cage-arrangement on the level, the need of stone steps over the wall is not apparent. On the other side of the road are some of the few lodges—so such houses are



Main Street, Ballina.

called in Ireland—that may be rented at Inniscrone for a most moderate rental. These houses on hire are usually most inartistic, and are well kept in the background if possible.

The motor or long-car drive to Ballina is an advantage to Inniscrone, as the little town affords quite enough

shops to satisfy the appetite obtained from invigorating Inniscrone air. Ballina itself is famous for its salmon-fishing, and the headquarters there for fishing men and women is the Moy Hotel. Prince Arthur of Connaught has stayed there for the fishing, but the sport he obtained, unfortunately, was not good. The sport during the last few years on all Irish salmon waters has been very poor.

From Ballina, where the rail ends, to Dromore West



Gigantic Monolith, between Easky and Dromore West.

the traveller has the choice of two roads. The prettier is the longer, affording sea views all the way along the east shore of Killala Bay, rounding Lenadoon Point, and passing by Easky, a most picturesque, out-of-the-world, quaint little village. Inniscrone to Easky is some fifteen and a half miles, but they do not think much of that for a morning's drive in Ireland.

Between Easky and Dromore West on the right—that is, the south—side of the road is a remarkable, enormous granite boulder. It stands quite alone, looking singularly out of place, dumped down in a flat field, and, to add to its weirdness, a wide split right through its substance gapes, as if made by the sword of a Titan. Naturally, being on Irish soil, it is associated with giants. Every unusual natural object in Ireland possesses its own peculiar blood-curdling horror or romantic legend. Though, as Joaquin Miller says,

> "Long, long agone there was a day
> When there were giants in the land,"

I fear much that these Irish representatives of the genus are as mythical as are the first editions of London evening newspapers. The giant in connection with this particular monolith was fond of potatoes, and finding one very hard and ill-cooked he flung it out of the pot, and then, coming across it on the field one day, hit it with his fist in anger—hence the crack. The potato element of the yarn marks it as of comparatively modern invention. Now, as the field wherein this giant stone rests is fenced off from the road by a stiff stone wall, one naturally expected to find a stile handy in order to get over to inspect the monster. But no. Where a stile would have been eminently appropriate there was none, so the camera had to be taken over the wall at some risk in order to obtain the photograph.

One cannot help being struck all over this part of Ireland with the great number of fairy-rings or raths. These are circular in form, from twenty to forty yards

across, generally meadow land, surrounded by a mound with a ditch inside. They are really the remains of earthen forts in which the small chiefs of old resided. The peasants implicitly believe they are enchanted, and will never venture inside the fairy circle after sundown, for the inattentive mortal then crossing the little people's domain would be liable to be obliged to dance and caper



Entrance to Fairy Ring, Monolith in front.

with them until sunrise, the fatigue arising from such untoward and uncanny exertions generally resulting in death, or something near it. We thoroughly explored one of the most perfect ones. The dry moat surrounding it was complete, the earth rampart very little broken down. The slab-stone-lined entrance to the interior

could be easily entered and the internal passage crawled along until exit was obtained at the other side of the ring, but still within the rampart.

A large monolith, half-buried in the turf, is there a conspicuous object, and, as a similar one is noticeable in other rings in the neighbourhood, it no doubt served some useful purpose in the communal economy of those far-off days when people lived in these rings, and is not of accidental occurrence. Was this large stone block sacrificial, or had it to do with the needs of the household, or rather moundhold, or was it merely indicative to serve as a mark on moonless nights to shew the gay Lotharios of that period the way home to the burrow?

At Dromore West, by the side of a truly picturesque stile overshadowed by trees, the two roads from Ballina join forces, and, as one, proceed to Sligo. This stile is apparently built for artistic effect; an open gate adjoining banishing any other theory to account for its presence, and from the comfortable little hotel opposite it is a charmingly peaceful object. A wonderfully pushing stream bustles through the pretty village of Dromore West, making some splashing falls as the water pours down from the Ox Mountains over the granite boulders.

The roads all over this part of Ireland are in fairly good order, and a motor-car trip there is the most delightful method of introduction to the scenery. But then you lose the peculiar delights of the Irish outside car and the weird, grim stories of its driver.

Dr. Peard, whose *A Year of Liberty* (1867) is, even now, the leading book on the inland water fishing of Connemara and the West of Ireland, gives it as his



Stile at juncture of roads, Dromore West.

opinion that the Moy—the Ballina river—is the best open water in the three kingdoms. The spring fishing is from the middle of March till May 15th, as the river is large and cannot be relied upon at the beginning of the season. "Pontoon," says Dr. Peard, "seldom wants a clean salmon on the opening day, for all early comers rest there before plunging into the wide waters of Lough Conn; but in the river, too, are some admirable casts, and many a heart will thrill at the mention of Mount-falcon, Coolcronane, Bannifinglas, and Foxford."

From the Weirs to Foxford the river Moy pursues a serpentine course for some ten miles, practically the whole of which is available for angling unimpeded by trees. The banks are low and the water generally level with the meadows—advantages of no small importance to the enthusiastic fisherman. But it may be said that if tourists would, in their journeyings through Ireland, inquire of local people more frequently and consult good maps more diligently they would obtain far better fishing, and at a much less cost, than is now to be had at a few much-vaunted, puffed-up, and often over-fished angling stations.

Fishers, like sheep, follow one another year after year to the same spots. Why do not they strike out boldly and discover new fishing streams and lakes? Some of the best fishing grounds in Ireland are, I am convinced, not yet known.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sligo and its Surroundings.

It is interesting to observe, as one travels in various countries, the compensations Nature adopts to keep the balance of advantages just. Sheffield, one of the dirtiest of English towns, is surrounded by lovely, bright, smiling scenery. Pittsburg—the dirty Sheffield of the States—has its compensations in the beauteous Monongahela, and many other cities might be named whose disadvantages are balanced by advantages. Sligo, a most uninteresting place in itself, is embosomed in scenery which certainly should not be missed by the visitor to Connemara. The scenery round Sligo is not half enough known.

Entering Connemara by Recess in the south, no one can say that he has seen the beauties of this part of Ireland without leaving the neighbourhood by way of Sligo in the north.

He will then depart from the district with the pleasantest of impressions. Satiated with the beauties of the south, I can safely promise that his artistic palate will receive a final satisfactory fillip at Sligo, even if only two days be spent in that ancient city as a centre.

Lough Gill—

> "where savage grandeur wakes
> An awful thrill that softens into sighs"—

is a lake district of striking pictures, never tame or insignificant, in the very heart of mountains, which are often



Glencar Waterfall, near Sligo.



Mrs. Sibbery's Cottage, close to Glencar Waterfall.

precipitous to the water edge. And then there is Glencar.

The drive to Glencar will only occupy a morning, and it should not be missed. Grand views all the way, directly one leaves the town's environs, of "mountains on whose barren breast the labouring clouds do often rest," make each turn of the Devonshire-like lane a spot for a picture. Up to now, few artists have turned serious attention to Sligo, but when they do, and artistic England realizes the attractions of that part of Ireland, a good day will dawn for Sligo.

We are glad to notice one artist, at any rate (Mr. McIvor Grierson, R.I.), has temporarily made this place his headquarters, with already some excellent results.

On the way to Glencar the awfully precipitous cliff, "Protestant's Leap," is seen on the right. It was over that fearful bluff, during the Parliamentary War, that a Protestant, being pursued by a body of horsemen at night, led them all to destruction by himself leading the way to death over the edge.

There are several waterfalls at Glencar, a fine one, with a sheer drop of forty or fifty feet, being that at the back of Mrs. Sibbery's pretty, old-fashioned cottage. Good fishing is obtainable in the lake, and at the cottage homely accommodation of the unpretentious but comfortable kind can be had.

The five-mile drive to Ross Point, a charming and clean village, with lodging-houses and several hotels, on the west end of a promontory on the north of Sligo harbour, is worth taking. It possesses also excellent golf links, a club house, and a first-rate sea-bathing place.

The Metal Man, with outstretched arms and finger extended, points out the channel between Coney Island and Deadman's Point (as the point beyond Rosses is called) for ships to take on proceeding up the estuary to Sligo. He is colossal, twelve feet high, and stands on a pedestal, from which, unlike most exalted personages, he never descends, but, ever on duty, night and day, with unerring finger points out to vessels the path they should pursue.

He is suitably of the sailor type, clad in white trousers, royal blue sailor coat, turned-down collar, and black tie. His hair is of stiff wire, and stands up like a pig-bristle brush—a thoughtful plan of the designer to prevent birds using his cranium as a roosting-place or observation point of vantage. His solid metal constitution is kept well painted, so that he always looks spick and span as a sailor-man should, even though he belong to a past generation. At low-water he is high and dry all by himself on a little island, and passengers from boats landing there can climb up to his legs, an obliging ladder being affixed to the pedestal for that purpose. The inhabitants of Coney Island and Rosses Point, on either side of him, consider the winkles found around his location the best in the neighbourhood, and, sad to relate, it is considered quite fashionable to write one's name on his immaculate duck trousers—to such foul uses may understandings be put.

Sligo possesses an ancient Abbey in ruins, but containing many historical monuments and artistic carvings, conveniently placed in the centre of the town, and also many public buildings, concerning which, is not their

history, authentic and non-authentic, sufficiently set forth in the various guide-books on the subject?

My friend Mr. Richard J. Kelly, of the Irish Bar, who knows Sligo well, has kindly given me the following information regarding the town:—

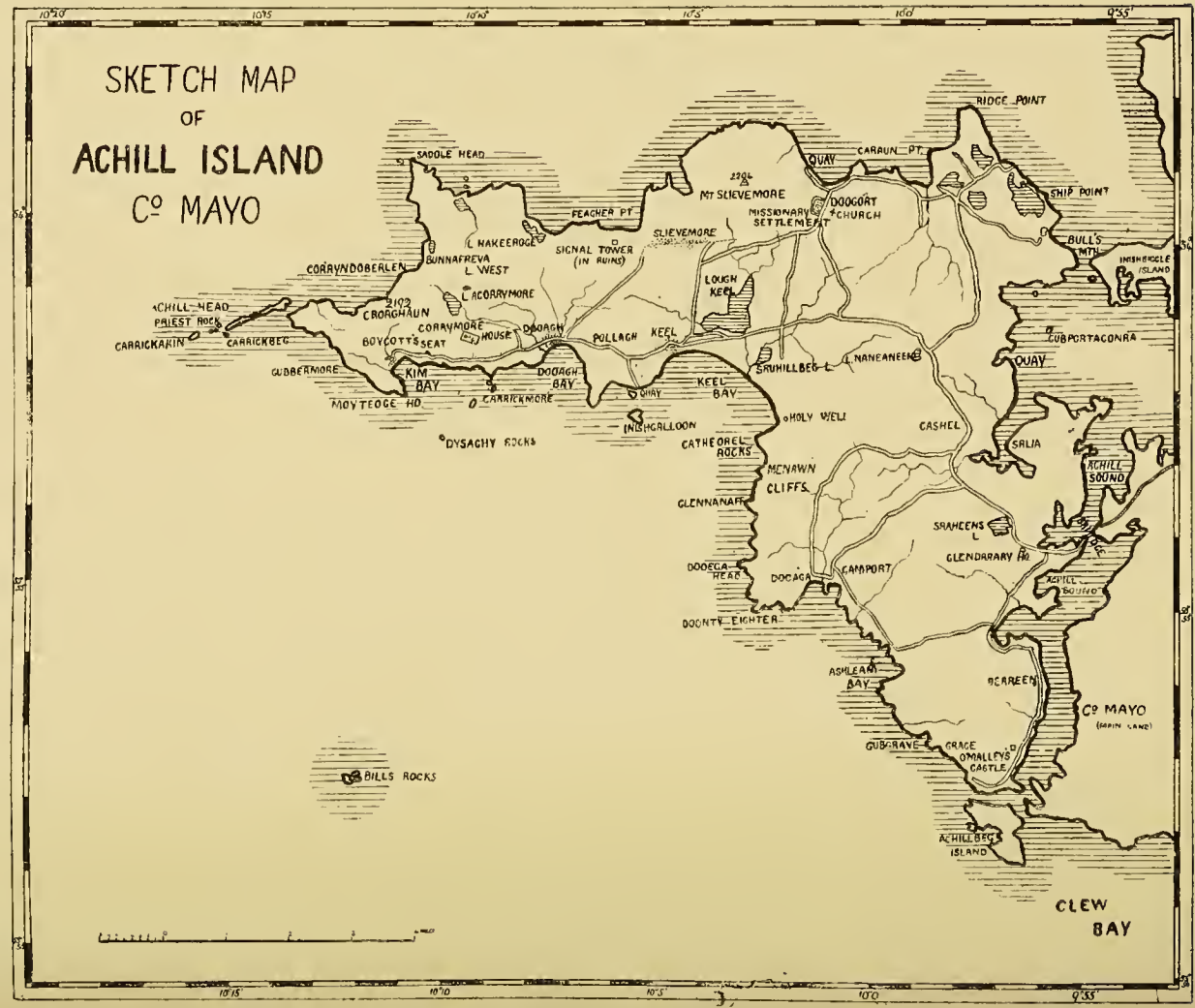
The County is filled with ancient monuments and a wonderful wealth of cromlechs in the neigbourhood of the town.

The charter of civic incorporation is dated 20th March in the eleventh year of the reign of James I., and Sligo was then and thereby incorporated under the name of Provost and free burgesses of the Borough of Sligo; the corporation to consist of a provost, twelve free burgesses, and a commonalty, and it still retains this privilege, having its mayor and corporation and powers as an Urban District Council. The port is a well-managed one, with an increasing and important trade, and Sligo's merchants are most enterprising and go-ahead, well known for their integrity and enterprise. The trade of the town is a developing one, being carefully looked after and given every inducement for expansion and facility for pursuit.

In 1900 we find there were 740 vessels of 707,060 tons entered, and 607 of 66,012 cleared. The population now stands by the census of 1901 at 10,870 and 1902 houses.

The town is 137 miles from Dublin, and can be reached by several Railway Companies from (1) the Broadstone or Claremorris run by the Midland Co.; (2) by Tuam and Claremorris by the Great Southern Co.; or (3) from Enniskillen by the Sligo and Leitrim Railway Co. It has a bi-weekly steamship service with Glasgow, and a weekly service with Liverpool. The municipal

buildings, erected in 1865, are a fine imposing structure, standing in a prominent part of the town, and they were erected at a cost of £12,000. The ground floor of the building consists of an exchange, free library and reading room, chamber of commerce, borough court and council chamber, and other offices. The upper floor consists of a large assembly room, 74 feet by 32 feet. The corporation at present consists of a mayor (Mr. Flanagan), six aldermen, and eighteen councillors, with a revenue of £12,000. The principal buildings are the fine Roman Catholic Cathedral, schools, and Bishop's house, the courthouse, the four banks, asylum, the Protestant Churches of St. John and Calry, the Abbey, Friary, Independent, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches. The Bank of Ireland, Belfast, Hibernian, Provincial and Ulster Banking Co. have branches here. The *Independent* and *Champion* are its local papers, and it has several well-appointed hotels, the principal being the Imperial and Victoria.


SKETCH MAP
OF
ACHILL ISLAND
Co MAYO
SADDLE HEAD
FEACHER PT
L NAKEEROGE
BUNNAFREVA
L WEST
CORRYNDOBERLEN
L CORRYMORE
CROAGHAUN
CORRYMORE HOUSE
DOOAGH
POLLAGH
KEEL
BOYCOTT'S SEAT
KIM BAY
DOOAGH BAY
KEEL BAY
QUAY
CARRICKAKIN
CARRICKBEG
GUBBERMORE
MOYTEOGE HD
CARRICKMORE
INISHGALLOON
DYSACHY ROCKS
HOLY WELL
CATHEDREL ROCKS
MCNAWN CLIFFS
GLENNANAFF
DOOEGA HEAD
DOOAGH
DOONTY EIGHTER
ASHLEAM BAY
BILLS ROCKS
Mt SLIEVEMORE
SLIEVEMORE
SIGNAL TOWER (IN RUINS)
MISSIONARY SETTLEMENT
DOOGORT CHURCH
LOUGH KEEL
SRUHILLBEG
L NANEANEEN
CARAUN PT
QUAY
RIDGE POINT
SHIP POINT
BULL'S MTN
INISHBIGGLE ISLAND
CUBPORTACONRA
QUAY
CASHEL
SALIA
ACHILL SOUND
SRAHEENS
GLENDARAARY
CAMPORT
ACHILL SOUND
BEAREEN
Co MAYO
GUBGRAVE
GRACE O'MALLEY'S CASTLE
ACHILL BEG ISLAND
CLEW BAY
ACHILL HEAD
PRIEST ROCK

PART IV.

ACHILL ISLAND.

CHAPTER XX.

ACHILL ISLAND—BOG-BUTTER—SUGGESTED NATIONAL PARK—WILD GOATS—DUGORT—DOOAGH.

THERE is unquestionably a tendency with many writers to exaggerate the beauties of foreign places, thereby tacitly belittling the charms of spots nearer home. Familiarity with home scenes to which we are accustomed, if it does not breed contempt, always engenders indifference.

The truth is, every landscape, every seascape, whether at home or abroad, is lovely. The same sun, which in setting seems marvellously wonderful from the summit of Tenerife's Peak, sinks to rest with just as wonderful roseate hues over Acton as seen from Hammersmith. The sunsets at Margate are probably as beautiful as any in the world. Turner no doubt appreciated them if we do not. The stars in Norway skies, scintillating like

celestial diamonds, are the same stars causing the soul to thrill within us in Scotland. The same awe-inspiring stillness of the forest's depths in Canada is the same quietness one meets with in the heart of Ireland's bogs.

Now this is not to lead up to a high "falutin" eulogy of the superlative attractions of Achill—far from it—yet it is only just and fair to say at the commencement that Achill is a place I like. It has its own charms, its peculiar idiosyncrasies of people and scenery which happen to appeal to me. Others may not be charmed with the place at all. I shall think not the worse of them for that. My pen, camera, and lenses together humbly try to present a picture of Achill as it is—as we see the largest of Ireland's islands.

We may have introduced between us too many bright lights where others may possibly see only shadows. At any rate the picture here given of the island is the result of several years' intimate acquaintance with the place and its inhabitants—its coast, its bays, its caves, its natural history, and, I may say as well, its sorrows and its joys.

Before the railway was extended from Westport, forty miles distant, to Achill Sound, the island of Achill—the Irish Westward Ho!—was very much isolated, and even now, though connected with the mainland, the mails are still brought to Achill from Westport in a car by road, as they were previously. The railway has only been made within the last few years, but sufficient time has elapsed to give the outside world a glimpse of the peculiarities of this most westerly spot of Ireland; and it is an island worth visiting for its old fashions, habits, customs, and

costumes, and it possesses magnificent rocky, even stupendous, precipitous scenery. Each year the number of visitors slowly increases, but were the beauties of the island better known there would be a rush for it in the summer and autumn.

The line ends on the mainland at Achill Sound, where a long low bridge, opened in 1888—with a swinging centre-piece for the passage of masted vessels—is carried on to a road which runs in a westerly direction through the middle of the island. This trunk road forks into two main tracks—one to the Protestant settlement of Dugort (or Doogort, as it is sometimes spelt) on the north, and the other to Keel Bay and its neighbour, Dooagh Bay, fourteen miles distant, on the south.

From Dooagh a mountain road, ending in a grass track, takes the travellers down to Kim Bay (or Keem Bay—these Irish names have many spellings), and a branch road, shortly after leaving the Sound on the left, conducts him to the Norwegian fiord-like district of Doega.

The road stones are obtained from the shore, or from the rock out-crop which occurs occasionally in the bog. And the process of road-mending is simple. The stones are broken by the wayside into small pieces and laid on the bog with sea-sand to bind them. Steam, or even any horse or hand road-rollers are unknown. Consequently, the way is very like a long-extended and attenuated spring mattress, which yields to, and springs up again after, the passage of a vehicle, and on which even the pedestrian causes a noticeable quiver.

Horses can trot very fast and safely over these bog

roads, and they seldom stumble, broken knees being rare. The whole surface of the island is bog-covered, overlaid with beautiful purple heather, but unfortunately totally devoid of trees, except for a few at Dugort and the Sound, where a plantation round a house is an agreeable variation, and where gigantic fuchsia trees, osmunda ferns, honeysuckle, and bramble bushes luxuriate; with these exceptions, bog—thick black-looking bog, when it is cut into—reigns supreme. The numerous hardened branches and large, dry, gnarled, black tree-roots which are dug out of it, however, shew that once Achill was forest-clad. These ancient, eccentric, even fantastic looking pieces of wood are used for barriers at the track-ends between the bog-draining ditches, where they join the road and prevent cattle straying, so that in treeless Achill they are now most useful.

Another product of the bogs is butter. Some persons have advanced the theory that bog-butter is a substance formed from the peat itself, but chemical analysis goes to shew that it still possesses the chief characteristics of butter—butter from the cow. The general belief is that it was placed in the bog and grown over since by vegetation. It is usually found in 20 and even in 100 lb. lumps at depths as much as 14 feet below the surface. As a rule the original shapes of these lumps are preserved. On one was seen finger-prints, on another a coarse hempen cloth was found wrapped round the butter, which crumpled to dust on exposure to the atmosphere. From the position of these finds in the Irish bogs it is generally thought that they have been there at least one thousand years. Now, why did the ancient inhabitants of Ireland

place butter in large lumps in the bogs? It may be that the butter was placed there in hiding from the rapacity of the Danes or other invaders, or that the bog was an excellent storehouse, cool and antiseptic, where butter kept well. It is just possible that the environment of bog imparted a distinct and much-sought-after flavour to butter which had been thus buried.

When now taken out of the bogs dogs will eat it, and it has a greyish-white colour, with a slightly rancid smell. It contains no salt, only a trace of nitrogenous matter, and very little moisture. Bog-butter is an interesting link with the far past, at any rate.

Curiously enough the butter makers in the country districts of Ireland to-day very generally put up their butter in lumps similar in shape to those of the ancient Irish.

The following extract from Dineley's "Tour in Ireland" (*Journal of the Kilkenny and South East of Ireland Archæological Society*, 1885-7, p. 186) records the practice of burying butter in Charles II.'s time: "Dyet generally of the vulgar Irish are . . . . Butter layd up in wicker basketts, mixed with store of [blank in original], a sort of garlick, and buried for some time in a bog, to make provision of an high tast for Lent." Sir William Petty, in his *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, makes mention of "butter made rancid by keeping in bogs."*

The prevailing feature of Achill is wind, chiefly south-west, and every dwelling is constructed to combat its onslaughts. But it is a soft balmy wind, most bracing in effect, making Achill a very desirable holiday resort for

* See *Notes and Queries*, May 26, 1906, p. 416.

tired brain-workers, anæmic persons, and those wearied with city life.

Roofs have all to be tied down with straw bands, to which weighty stones are attached at the ends to withstand the onslaughts of the wind. The better-to-do inhabitants use rope instead of straw bands to keep the



Turf Stack with large stones to prevent wind blowing the turf away, Dooagh, Achill.

turf or thatch roof over their heads. Turf stacks have also similarly to be protected by stones.

There is a curious connection between Achill Sound Bridge and foxes. It is now a meritorious action, and sportsmanlike, to shoot or trap foxes in Achill, for they

have so increased during the past few years as to have become a positive and universal nuisance. Until this bridge was built, connecting the mainland with the island, foxes were scarce, so rare that the head and brush of a solitary specimen were hung up in the tap-room of an inn in the island on show as a curiosity. The foxes have evidently rushed across the bridge, finding a magnificent country on the island side with innumerable caves and inaccessible precipices for their unmolested increase. So bold have they become that on almost any night they may be seen visiting the villages and the sea shore, on the prowl for stray fowl or fish offal on the strand. They regularly visit certain spots at night, and dig up sand eels for food, a locality particularly favoured by them being Kim Bay, where one night, when encamped there, we saw no less than three together. This fox increase has become such a nuisance that no poultry can ever be allowed out during the night time, and many poor women bewail the loss of geese on the bogs even during the day-time. A cottager, who could ill afford any decrease of worldly goods, had, to my knowledge, only the remains of three geese to collect from the bog one autumn.

Hares used to be abundant all over the island, hampers full being sent away weekly; but they have now become extremely rare, the foxes having already quite wiped them out, and the same remark applies to grouse and other game. Masters of hounds might do worse than employ some of the natives to send them regular consignments of foxes for hunting. The effect of such a demand would be immeasurably beneficial to the island. The diminution of grouse is, perhaps, more noticeable still, for

very old people, who know the island, describe them as having been formerly as plentiful as the poultry in a farmyard, all over the heather-covered mountains.

The entrance to Achill Sound, on the north, is only about three hundred yards wide, and appropriately goes by the name of Bull's Mouth, for the tides there rush in and out, and appear quite mad in their fury to get through. The entrance at the south might similarly bear the same name, but to prevent confusion it does not. Achill Beg, an island—little Achill—bounds this end of the straits. The turbulence of the tide, that twice daily rushes through this narrow channel, is easily understood, for the two large bays of Blacksod and Clew have to balance their waters by means of it. In fact, it is a miniature Straits of Dover, where the North Sea and the Atlantic similarly daily strike a water-balance. The Admiralty chart shews that the depth varies from six fathoms to one-quarter of a fathom, and the smaller numbers and fractions predominate, indicating that the straits are by no means easy to navigate. Skill, and a thorough knowledge of the tides, are required to navigate the straits; but fishing-boats and hookers naturally prefer the passage of the Sound, which in a favourable wind may mean an hour to an entire day spent in rounding Achill Head. The two entrances are, in short, most dangerous, and the list of deaths from small boats and large sailing vessels, which have attempted the passage and foundered, would be a long one. On the other hand, Bull's Mouth and the quiet waters within have saved many a vessel from shipwreck in a stiff westerly gale. There are two sides to every picture.



The south end of Achill Sound, shewing Achill Beg.

Some time ago it was proposed—seriously I suppose—to turn Achill into a great national park, where animals could be preserved which are being exterminated, and others, which have already long since disappeared from our shores, reintroduced. I fear this delightful suggestion proceeded from those not knowing the island and its people. It was naively said the wild deer of Achill would *inter alia* be preserved. There are no wild deer in Achill. The nearest approach to them are the wild goats of Saddle Head. Then, again, wild animals require woods to shelter them. The island is wanting in trees—lamentably so. The only pretence at a wood is a plantation round one gentleman's house at Achill Sound, not far from the bridge. The idea of such a naturalist's paradise is entrancing. But the cold douche of prosaic facts often destroys pet illusions. There are no woods for forest-creatures to live and breed in. There is only bare, damp bog—everlasting bog—and the surface of the island does not even now provide enough grazing for the wretched, half-starved cows and sheep that only just manage to exist there. Further, the natives would never leave the island, and there are now about five thousand to be reckoned with. They are mostly inveterate poachers—all the Irish are—and it would be practically impossible to preserve animals or game of any kind. I am quite sorry to have to dispel the dream of an El Dorado, Achill, Natural History Preserve—I so deeply sympathize with the dreamers.

Achill Head is the portion of the island which penetrates furthest westward into the ocean, and it, in conjunction with its neighbour, Saddle Head, consists of

sheer, frowning precipices, no less than two thousand feet in height, and chaotically disarranged boulders of gigantic proportions, round which the Atlantic rollers fume and smoke. In Norway only have I seen cliffs to approach these Achill cliffs for grandeur. The feeling of vastness imparted is doubtless enhanced by the broad, open Atlantic in front, whose billows roar and buffet on the rocks below.

These awful precipices and slopes, some at an angle of even sixty degrees, afford a home for the only wild goats now remaining in this country. So far as is known, they roam about in three flocks, each flock from thirty to fifty strong; and the writer recently saw one of them, through a telescope, led by a large, white, big-horned billy going over to the precipice from the cliffs above Kim Bay. In attempting to shoot them several accidents have happened and many broken bones been the result, so that the animals, luckily, are fairly safe from man's inherent exterminating instinct. The owner of this part of the island also is chary of allowing anyone to interfere with them, a determination to be applauded, and which we trust will be adhered to. Whether they are, strictly speaking, wild or only domestic goats gone wild is not known. They have been wild, very wild, from time immemorial, and history sayeth not to the contrary. At any rate they are a noticeable feature of Achill.

Curlew are very plentiful all over this west coast. They are grey in colour, with long bills, and are very shy and most difficult to shoot. When the harvest is out in the fields they become plump and fat, and are delicious when cooked before a red fire and the fat allowed to drip

into bread beneath. At other seasons of the year they are not so palatable. They feed upon worms, and are very partial to the various kinds of crawly things frequenting the mud and wet, boggy ground by the shore. In the evening, when fishing up the Killaries or by the Achill shore, we frequently would notice five, seven, or twelve flying overhead from headland to headland.

Seals abound round this part of the coast, and seldom can one go out fishing without coming across numbers of the species. It is almost hopeless to shoot them in the sea, as when struck, even in a vital spot, they immediately sink, and very rarely are their bodies found. The only chance of obtaining them is to kill them on land. We have known of a pedestrian cutting off a seal's retreat when basking on a rock, and despatching it with a blow on the head from a bludgeon. But this seal does not furnish the valuable sealskin so highly prized by ladies.

Dugort, on the north of the island, and the least picturesque portion of it, is where the tourists go, there being situated three unpretentious hotels. This is the Protestant settlement of the island. The entire population, for instance, of the thickly-populated village of Dooagh is Roman Catholic, with one exception. There is a Church of Ireland clergyman at Dugort, and several slate-roofed houses, and here the handful of well-to-do residents chiefly dwell, including the justly popular hard-worked doctor, who has all Achill for his sphere of duty.

The establishment of the "Colony"—as Dugort is also called—was commenced in the year 1833 for the avowed purpose of "converting Romanists." The Minister, Mr. Nangle, set to work at this task on the

1st of August, 1834. The colony was to be supported by subscriptions and donations raised throughout the kingdom. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall wrote of the settlement in 1842, after having visited it and gone somewhat thoroughly into its history and doings: "Such experi-



The Butcher, Achill Island.

ments as that at Achill will be made in vain; we have shewn that here it has been a complete failure. The principles upon which it has been conducted have not been in accordance with the divine precept of 'charity,' nor has the clergyman under whose control the settle-

ment is placed been an example of that gentle, peace-loving, and *persuasive* zeal, that 'meek and unaffected grace,' which should distinguish a humble follower of 'the Lord and Master.'" Mr. Nangle's immediate oversight of the colony was withdrawn in 1852, though for



His Majesty's Mails and how they arrive, Dooagh. This was a parcel-post delivery on a bare-back horse.

the remainder of his life he still took an interest in the undertaking. He died in 1883 in his eighty-fourth year.

Except for a few general stores at Achill Sound, shops are unknown on the island. At Dooagh, where I have stayed in the only slate-roof cottage the place possesses, the butcher gives you a preliminary call to inquire

whether you can take a portion, and, if so, which, of a sheep. Having pre-arranged for the disposal of the carcase, a sheep is killed and he brings round on horseback, in a basket pannier, the joint or joints you bespoke. To save all difficulties of calculation he charges in a liberal Irish fashion sixpence a pound all round for meat, and weighs it with an old-fashioned steel-yard. Beef is not obtainable in Achill; it has to be sent for to Westport, and consequently, after its forty-mile journey, is correspondingly appreciated.

The "postman" at Dooagh was a woman, and when she had heavy parcels to bring she generally arrived on horseback.

The natives are shy with strangers, and can scarcely be got to answer a question until they get to know you, while it is a considerable time before they take you into their confidence.

The very young children crawl about on the cabin floor, and are occasionally carried on the back in a shawl which envelops the mother when visiting the potato patch or turf stack. Rudely-shaped wooden cradles are common, and frequently a slightly older scion of the house will be seen methodically rocking the latest arrival. The love of parents for their children is pleasantly noticeable.

Such a thing as cruelty to children is unknown, and often a woman, poor in the extreme, with several children (or a "few," as they say), will adopt the orphan child of a neighbouring cabin. Poor as they are, and in scanty clothes, the children are happy, and it is quite refreshing to witness the merry games, such as varieties of "kiss-in-

the-ring" and "round about the mulberry bush," they get up amongst themselves on the road side, ring and running games predominating. They never seem to quarrel or fight, and the little urchins, shoeless, stockingless, hatless, may be seen in odd corners round the hovels, building houses out of turf pieces, and, when the tide is out, constructing imitation cabins in sea sand. Poverty among city children is usually painful to witness, but among the Irish peasantry that feeling is never present. The happiness and cheeriness of the Irish poor is a most delightful and characteristic national trait.

In the harvesting time the young men nearly all go to Scotland and Lancashire to work as agricultural labourers, in order to earn enough to keep their families at home. From Dooagh alone some two hundred at least go yearly on this bread-winning quest, even girls from fourteen years of age having to turn out and work; and this they do without complaining and with exemplary patience, but it is pitiable that so drastic a remedy for poverty should be necessary.

Beyond the visits to Scotland and the north-west of England for agricultural work, the natives of Achill travel very little, and even now the majority of them have never left the island. One very old fisherman, who shewed signs in his conversation of a wider grasp of problems than his neighbours, we found had once been to London—the event of his life. He had represented Achill fishery at the Fisheries Exhibition, and went over with an island curragh and the native fishing gear. When asked what arrested his attention most in London he paused, and then said, "That railway underneath the

earth was a terrible place. I went down and got lost there. I never wish to go there again." The memory of his awful experience on the Underground will never fade from his mind. When pressed as to what he liked best he unhesitatingly replied: "That place where the wax people are dressed up quite real like"—a striking testimony to the far-seeing business shrewdness of the long-departed little old French lady in black satin.

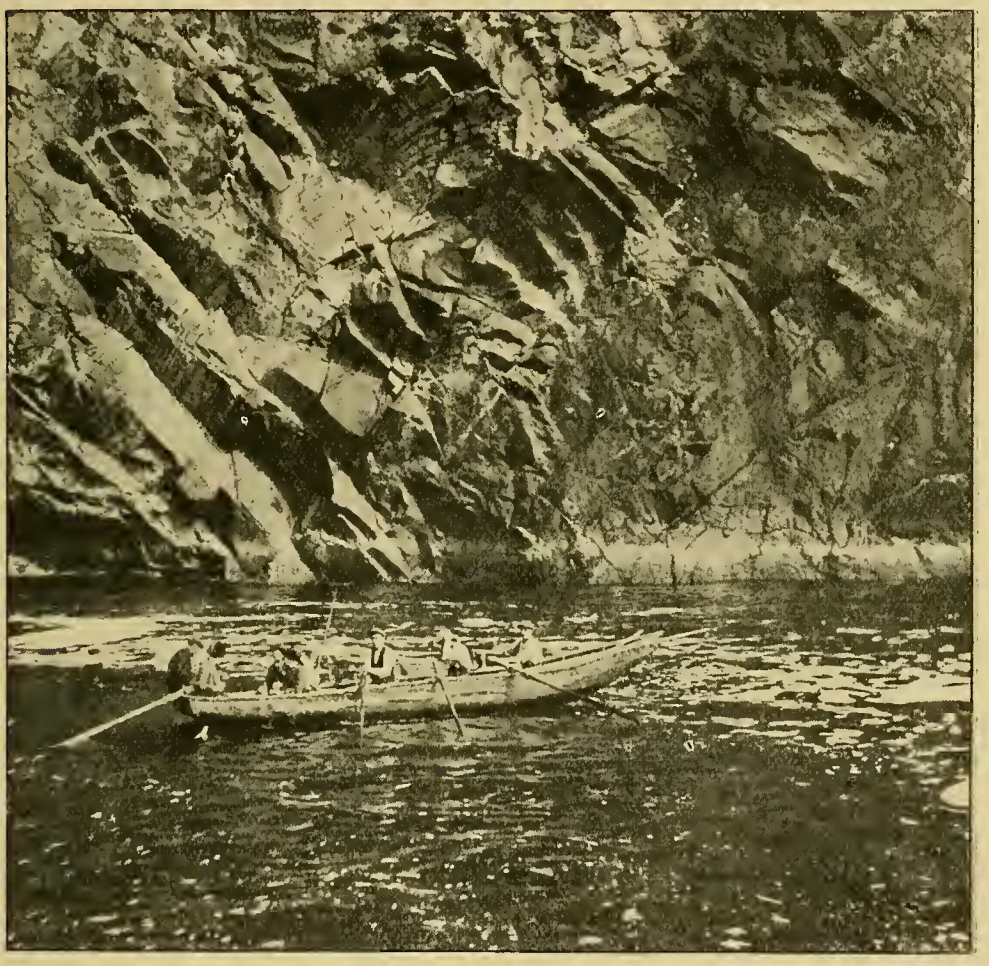
A visit to Westport is, to the Achill islander, what a visit to London was from the country fifty years ago, and the height of possible dissipation is the monthly fair at the Sound, and the even greater excitement of the yearly races, horse and athletic, at Mulranny, or Mallaranny, a few miles distant, on the mainland, to which we have already referred.*

Before the bridge was built scarcely any islander ventured on the toilsome journey to the mainland at all; and the fact that the natives are beginning to move about is a hopeful sign for the future, for seeing decent ways of living and housing elsewhere will inevitably make them think and compare the same with their own homes and surroundings. The advent of more and more visitors to the island, consequent upon the railway now having reached their doors, cannot but have an advantageous effect upon them, not only as increasing the circulation of money, but also as effecting a refining influence upon their habits.

The people are terribly afraid of cancer, which they call "the evil," and they tell a story of an old woman on the mainland who sells a plaster for the disease at five

* Page 111.

shillings each, which, from all we gathered, must command a large sale. If the plaster, after being applied to the suspected spot for about a month, comes off with the roots of "the evil" attached thereto, the cancer is cured. They are sensitively secretive about this mar-



Four-paddle Canoe at Achill Head. The curiously-formed precipitous Rocks are here seen.

vellous old quack, as it seems that she has once been prosecuted and fined on the mainland, but the local Achill faith in her is still unimpaired.

Many curious superstitions linger here, as they do

among far better educated people; for instance, a party of fishermen were going out to fish at Achill Head—an expedition, owing to the frail nature of the canoes, not lightly to be attempted—but they turned back because they chanced to meet a red-haired man, that colour of hair being held unlucky in fishing. And yet fair complexions and every shade of red hair are not uncommon.



Cabins and Children of Dooagh, Achill.

White heather is held to be lucky, and the finder of a clump on the bogs generally brings a spray home, as it is considered most suitable for a present. The belief in fairies, too, has by no means died out.

Some of the children are distinctly pretty, with wondrously dark eyes and black hair, and some have that marvellously deep chestnut shade of hair so seldom seen in a state of nature, and which made some of Leighton's pictures famous. Many of the young women one sees

about Achill are undoubtedly handsome—one or two we saw would be called beauties in any country—and they have dark blue eyes, deep-red hair—

> "In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the husk
> Divides three-fold to shew the fruit within"—

perfect complexions, features, figure, and carriage.

And then another charm has to be added: the voices of Achill men, women, and children are always low-pitched, softly modulated, and musical—rather remarkable characteristics when one considers the open-air life they lead, and the windy, boisterous climate of their island. But hard work and open-air life soon destroy boudoir-like beauty, leaving, however, always the graceful carriage and pleasant voice.

The women's dress of Achill consists of bodices, skirts, and shawls, hats and boots being more conspicuous by their absence. The colours affected are gorgeous. Reds of all shades, from that associated with the Post Office to the pale, washed-out tint; purple of the most deeply imperial to the slaty; magentas and a colour called "puce" are likewise in vogue, as is also a vivid royal blue. Their blankets are home-made, of wool from the mountain sheep, and "natural wool" coloured. The woollen skirts are generally home-made, and dyed in the various and locally fashionable shades with dyes purchased in Westport. The yellows and browns and a prevalent mustard colour for the men's homespun are obtained by boiling a lichen which grows on the rocks at Kim Bay.

On Sundays and festivals the better-to-do women wear the well-known large, cover-all, Irish cloaks, generally deep blue in colour. When going to or returning from

Mass, riding on the bare back of a horse, with the legs dangling over the near side—and they sit well on the back part of the animal—they look most picturesque, though exceedingly Italian, or anything but twentieth-century English.

Round the Doega part of the island the prevailing colour of the women's dress is of the bright, sealing-wax-



Going to Mass, Achill Island. Note the Old Irish Cloak.

red order, and when in the tillage doing husbandry an exceedingly pleasing Mulready-like aspect is added to the landscape.

Nearly every cottage has its spinning-wheel, where the white wool (and very white is Achill wool) is combed and spun. Knitting and crocheting is the employment of women and girls in their spare time.

When tending cattle on the hillside, without such an occupation very lonely indeed would they be. Homespun and knitted stockings are much worn, and it is the custom to dye the leg part mustard colour, leaving the foot in its natural wool. These foot-gear are singularly



A well-to-do Cabin, Spinner and her Wheel, Achill Island. The carding implements are in the woman's hands.

warm and impervious to water, but it is only on great occasions that any foot apparel at all is donned.

Among the men the usual promenading dress is a short waistcoat and homespun trousers. A coat is the sign of a "wake" being on or a visit to church contemplated. The men also smoke cuddy pipes, short, stumpy,

white clays, or, at home, stout, longer-stemmed ones of the same ilk. The tobacco is the blackest of black plug roll, cut up in the palm of the hand and rubbed as required, and the same strong mixture of the weed and molasses is freely chewed.

The women also at home get great and almost universal comfort from a pipe, and a present of tobacco is as much appreciated by them as by the men.

Tea is drunk till it becomes a vice. Morning, noon, and night, tea, tea, tea. It seems to be more liked after a long course of boiling, the pernicious effect of which is apparent in the prevalent indigestion. Whisky in moderation is infinitely less harmful than tea in excess or when boiled. One old man in a miserable hovel was being sustained, we found, by his sympathetic neighbours on a mixture of very black and cold tea, in which were soaked heavy, doughy lumps of soda-bread. No wonder he felt bad. Every cottage makes its own soda-bread, which, with potatoes and butter-milk, seems to be the staple food of the inhabitants.

Except at wakes, drunkenness is not prevalent, and the public-houses are very moderate in number. Doega has none, the nearest to that village being the drinking shops at Achill Sound. Whisky is usually drunk neat, water being considered an unnecessary addition. Dooagh has one well-conducted public-house, a not excessive number for the relative importance of the village.

Achill used to be famous for illicit stills. A few years before the Halls visited it in 1842 there were at least fifty at work. But the energy of the great Irish temperance reformer, Father Mathew, utterly destroyed the



Dooagh Bay and Village, Achill. Croaghaun in the distance.

trade. Still even now *potheen*—for so it is termed—of a horribly raw, throat-rasping quality is not unknown.

I had one or two bottles once given to me, but found it quite impossible to drink it, no matter how diluted with water. It was fire-water of the rankest description. I presented it to an old coastguard in England. He was delighted with the gift, said it was worth drinking for he could taste it! He happened to be an Irishman, so perhaps it may also have recalled pleasant memories.

The wakes, with the terrible *keen*, are still kept up at Achill, and, as we have said, the sad attempt to drown sorrow in drink I have often seen. Men staggering out of a hovel with a coffin on their shoulders, and then almost fighting as to how it shall be placed on the side-car, another man with a wisp of straw bespattering the crowd around with holy water, or as likely as not simply beating the air—all more or less half-seas over. These are pictures I retain in my mind of funerals in Achill. Unfortunately funeral customs, like marriage customs, die hard.

Dooagh is a very quiet, delightfully sleepy village. In many ways it recalls a high-up Himalaya hamlet, a nestling encirclement of tillage in square patches, chiefly of rye, with deep drains between, around the cluster of primitive huts; prowling dogs with a common similarity of strain and containing a distinct dash of the collie; ducks, geese, pigs, and cattle straying along the roads. But Dooagh has the sea in the form of a bay on the south, where the rollers of the Atlantic in long sweeping laps occasionally prevent all fishing from the frail, canvas-covered, and tarred canoes. Achill is the most westerly

island of any size in Ireland, and Dooagh its most westerly village, so that Dooagh is the nearest village to America in the British Isles.

The place has one great want: a small pier or landing-stage running some fifty or one hundred yards into the sea is imperatively needed, so that boats could put out to sea when there is a surf on, which is frequently the case. At present, however moderate the sea may be at a little distance from the shore, access thereto is frequently prohibited by the long edging surf of the heavy rollers. Were such an inexpensive storm-wall made by the Congested Districts Board for Ireland, clincher-built boats could be used and the fishing of the village, now of the most spasmodic and desultory character, could be developed into an important industry.

At Dugort, on the north of the island, where there is no fishing of any importance, a concrete pier has been made by the Board, which is most useful for pleasure boating, enabling the residents at that side of the island to keep proper strong boats. The intention of the Board was, or ought to have been, not pleasure but business.

At Keel, too, an elaborate and expensive concreted small harbour has been constructed (it cost £1849), which at low tide is waterless, so that it is useless for harbour purposes. However, it is "just a grand trap," as the natives say, for seaweed; and the islanders go there for loads of it for top-dressing their plots of land. In fact, the position of the landing-places and harbours of Achill shews that the personal influence of interested individuals, rather than the real need of the inhabitants, has led to



A Waste of Fish at Kim Bay, Achill Island.

their location and construction. It is probably correct to say that not one of these harbours has ever had landed in it a cargo of fish; they are all at the wrong spots.

It was simply deplorable recently when, in consequence of the want of a storm-wall or landing-stage, in one evening alone out of a huge mass of herrings, at any rate more than 100,000, in the nets at Kim Bay, only at the most 40,000 were actually saved, and most of these in a broken and damaged condition. To deal with this valuable haul only frail canoes could be used, the absence of a landing-stage at Kim or Dooagh prohibiting the use of larger boats.

It is to be devoutly hoped that in future the Congested Districts Board for Ireland will consult those who know from practical experience the actual peculiarities of the tides round the shores, and the places where fish can best be caught and landed. The members of the Board are well and loyally intentioned, but it would be well if they left less to their officials and more frequently visited, unaccompanied by their officials, the outlying parts of their districts.

The idea of this Board for Ireland was a grand conception. It was to do great things. It was to enlarge holdings so that the actual occupiers could find sufficient means for comfortable and honourable existence on the land; it was to aid migration, where necessary, in order to effect this; it was to provide harbours and landing-stages for the promotion of fishery; it was to improve the breed of horses; and it was to do a host of other equally good and needed things for the congested districts of Ireland out of the public money. It may have performed

all these functions in some districts of Ireland, but it certainly has not in Achill.

I only speak from personal knowledge and practical observation in the limited area in question, which is undeniably the most congested district within the Union of Westport, County Mayo. The population of 4020 is very excessive in relation to the barren, unproductive nature of the soil, or rather bog, and so far from decreasing, it shews an increase of 252 over the census of 1891. The Board has taken no steps to remedy this state of things by withdrawing a reasonable number of the existing population to settlements on the mainland; consequently the young men and women of Achill, as has been mentioned, have year by year still to leave their homes and undergo the hardship of expatriation to Scotland and the north of England in search of labour.

Achill has an area of 36,346 acres, being about seven acres per individual, or, say, 35 acres to a family. Nevertheless the enormous majority of the occupiers are at or under £4 valuation, representing in general one or two arable acres at the utmost, with a mountain run, while all the choice portions of the island are in the hands of four graziers. For example, Achill Mission estate, 75 occupiers under £4 and 1919 acres grazed by the trustees. Pike estate, 366 occupiers under £4, 2046 acres grazed by two graziers and the landlord. M'Donnell estate, 47 occupiers under £4 and 1530 acres grazed by the landlord.

The heavy expenditure incurred by the Board in hackney breeding, well intentioned no doubt, was ill-advised, experimental, and little more than a waste of

money, which might have been better spent in other directions.

The old Achill ponies were famous for hardness, suitability for their work, and staying powers. The result of the Board's interference is that all over the island one hears that the horses are too soft for their work.

An instructive example of how the Board acts is afforded by the following. They bought from the railway a second-hand shanty with corrugated roof, and set it up at Dooagh as a curing-hut for fish. Then they took it down again in 1900 and removed it to another part of the island, on the ground apparently that fish were just then not being caught in sufficient quantities. The various removals of this hut must have cost considerably more than its value, and the roof suffered damage, and, being of iron, was not reparable. The absence of facilities for landing fish at Dooagh should have been known to the Board, and before building a curing-hut some sort of landing-stage should have been provided.

The cart was built before the horse was thought of. But when once such a trumpery hut was erected, surely it might have been allowed to remain till a proper place for landing fish to be cured had been built. The expenses of the officials of the Board in uselessly driving about in cars, where local people could give the information required at a considerable less expense, is common talk through the island.

It seems the Agricultural Department of the Board is in no better state. One of the head officials of that department (not now in the Board's employment) decided

that oats should be grown at Dooagh. The local people who met him assured him that they would not ripen. He insisted that they must. A plot was chosen, dug up, and manured according to instructions and under the special observations of the officials, with the result predicted by



Launching a Canoe.

the natives. The oats refused to rise a fraction beyond three inches out of the ground!

A cutting in the rocks has certainly been made at Dooagh, and a small piece of concrete work filled in at one spot, but the position of this totally inadequate and generally useless dock or landing-stage is forcibly

apparent when one gets to know the place and its fishing necessities. The rocks were blown up with dynamite, and the little piece of concrete filled in on the western side a few years ago at the sole expense of a benevolent London banker. He gave out of his own pocket £150 for the purpose, and the work was carried out principally



The Landing-place, Dooagh, Achill Island.

by the local fishermen, each man giving a week's labour. The fishermen had previously been accustomed to carry their canoes down to the sea there, which seems to have been the sole reason why the spot was chosen. Habit determines events more frequently than chance. The rocks on the eastern side, not having been cemented after cutting, have been dislodged by the sea, and have

reverted to Nature's local chaotic arrangement. On a dark night, to land on this uneven wall of rock-tops, with intervening chasms, is exceedingly dangerous, and one is lucky to leave Dooagh after a visit with only bruises on shins and ankles and without broken legs. Not long ago some lives were lost here in attempting to land one night from a canoe.

Many and many a day's remunerative fishing, to the certain knowledge of the writer, is lost at Dooagh and Kim Bay because the frail canoes cannot be launched beyond the grind of the dangerous beach-combers. When a storm-wall has been built, strong clincher boats could be anchored in the bay. An enterprising native tried to keep a large boat at Dooagh one year, but it has had to be laid up quite useless on the shore ever since he acquired it.

Probably the best and cheapest position for a storm-wall is a little to the west of the existing makeshift, where a small point of rock already shortens the break of the waves. Dooagh's advancement from its present state of deplorable poverty will begin when the Congested Districts Board builds, at a cost of certainly not more than £500, this much wanted improvement.

The depressingly sad story I have to tell about the Congested Districts Board for Ireland is not alone.

The general muddle, misrule, and waste of public money in working the various Land Acts in Ireland constitute a gigantic public scandal. The various departments overlap, duplicate, squander. They certainly provide snug berths for their officials. Place-hunting is carried on to an extent in Ireland quite unknown in

England. Several of these public departments could be rolled into one, with the result that a vast saving would be effected, and also much greater efficiency and promptness of action obtained. Dilatoriness and inefficiency reign supreme. Numerous and obvious examples of this wasteful and mischievous overlapping could be given. Piers, for instance, are erected by the Agricultural Board, the Estates Commissioners, as well as by the Congested Districts Board. Fancy any business man allowing three head men, three sets of clerks, three sets of engineers, three sets of officials, and three sets of workmen to run one branch of his business! That way, he would say, lies bankruptcy, if not stark, staring lunacy: and yet that is the way in Ireland.

The Land Commission can advance money for stock and improvements; so can the Public Works Board; so can the Congested Districts Board. Fancy any sane business man incurring three sets of great expenses for the simple purpose of lending money!

Then, again, there is the Landed Estates Court buying, holding, and selling land; the Congested Districts Board buying, holding, and selling land, and, so far as I know, probably other public bodies performing the identically same functions. The Land Valuation Department values the land of Ireland—so do the other departments, each with its own officials and each valuation independent of others. Truly it is Gilbertian, and, if it were not a serious matter, irresistibly comic.

Unfortunately for Ireland each Parliament seems to tinker worse than its predecessor, and to delight in adding to the number of public bodies, boards, and officials to

rule and govern the country—each with its separate salaried officers and underlings, and each with its separate office. These offices are spread all over Dublin and cause the public the greatest possible inconvenience. Departmentalism and red-tapeism run riot in Dublin, quite as badly as at Madrid, and the jealousy of one department interfering with another department, and the obstruction to business and advancement of Ireland's interests caused thereby, is simply intolerable and almost inconceivable. It is a huge Augean stable that needs cleansing. I have no axe to grind. I am personally not directly or indirectly connected in any way with one or other of these departments and therefore can boldly state the truth, and I say that for the real good of Ireland at least one half of these Boards should be swept away by Act of Parliament. The work could be done cheaper, more efficiently, and with vastly greater dispatch at one central Dublin office under one capable business and responsible head and with one staff. The saving of money would be enormous, and consequently much more money would be available for Ireland's material wants—and she wants every penny she can get, for just now she is in a bad way.

If one-half of the salaries of public officials in Ireland —and Irish public work could easily be done by one-half of the existing staff—was available and *actually spent* in making more roads, more light railways, and in the reduction of railway fares for passengers and goods, I venture to assert that many of the troubles and drawbacks in Ireland would gradually disappear of their own accord—would eventually right themselves. They would dwindle, diminish, go. We should hear no more of them.

The great influx of English into the country would bring money. The vastly increased means of intercommunication would be the means for obtaining better prices for farm produce. The demand for Irish produce and home industries would be greatly stimulated. Remunerative prices would be obtained for town, country, and farmyard commodities; the peasant farmers would be able to hold up their heads; handy markets would be available for fresh fish—a very great consideration. The whole country would benefit. Ireland is not a mighty continent requiring several governments to manage it; it is, comparatively speaking, only a small island. This seems to be lost sight of by our statesmen.

Concerning the Agricultural Council and Board, the *Tuam Herald* wrote in its leading article of May 26th, 1906, in reference to the competition between Canadian cattle and Irish in the English markets, and the Board's apathy in the dissemination of useful knowledge to the Irish peasantry:—

"We read in that mass of useless, undigested, and very uninteresting matter called the Report of the Department, that its income is something like £200,000. Yet while during the six years it has been given a free hand it has not only been trifling with and tinkering at Irish farming, but spending on its botching and its botches over £1,200,000. It has produced no real results, and we find this problem of cattle raising and tillage just as backward, just as full of doubt and difficulty as if never a penny were spent. No wonder men of any sense and spirit are sick of all this nonsense." I regret to say I can only endorse these outspoken words.

The climate of Achill, says Dr. Edgar Flinn (in *Ireland, its Health Resorts and Watering-Places*), "offers particular advantages to the invalid community. It has a fine bracing and exhilarating atmosphere, and the bathing facilities are remarkably good." The charts in Dr. Flinn's work shew that while the average temperature of Achill differs little from that of places as far south as Cork, it has considerable advantages in its relative freedom from excessive moisture. North-west Donegal and West Kerry (which includes Killarney) fall within areas of maximum rainfall, *i.e.*, from 60 to 80 inches per annum. Achill is put down as averaging 40 to 60 inches, or less than some of the popular health resorts in England.

When it does rain, it does rain in Achill, there is no mistake—but continuous rain which prevents one getting about is uncommon.

CHAPTER XXI.

Achill Island—Dooagh—Captain Boycott—Kim Bay—Borondon—The "Sea Otter"—Brown Trout—Cormorants—Keel—Inishgalloon—Cathedral Rocks—The Bee-hive Cabin.

The majority of the rude huts or cabins composing Dooagh lie in a cluster on the right bank of a bubbling trout stream, near its entrance over the rocks into the sea. They seemed at some time, very long ago, to have been promiscuously thrown out of a gigantic pepper-box on the strand, so extraordinary higgledy-piggledy placed are they. Being all of a similar singular style of architecture and size, it is not easy to find one's way about amongst them.

The poorest people of Dooagh live here, and abjectly poor some of them are. One old woman, for instance, of probably ninety years at least, lay a huddled-up mass of rags on one side of the hearth on the earth floor. Neighbours had given her a few pieces of turf for the fire. Rheumatic swellings the size of lemons on each wrist shewed how the poor soul for years had suffered and become incapable. On a rickety table a few bits of crockery, broken and cracked, without a vestige of food, were eloquent of destitution. In her windowless and black, smoke-dried loneliness, without an animal or bird of any kind, the old soul was dependent upon the visits of

her neighbours for a drink of water or a few potatoes. In an incessant torrent of mumbling accents she called down blessings from heaven and all the saints upon her visitors who tried to impart a little temporary amelioration into her life. This old woman is known as a "bad case," a description the neighbours have no scruple in using before her face, and she is in receipt of the magnificent sum of one shilling a week from the parish. We paid her many surprise visits, and hardly ever saw any food in the shanty which a respectable Berkshire pig would not turn his nose up at.

But this "bad case" is not singular. An old man in rags, and a similar hovel, close by, living quite alone, when presented with some clothing, used a form of blessing of a novel character—that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The unexpected magnificent gift must have upset him! The present of an old waistcoat to another native produced the softly-repeated expression of evidently genuine delight, "By gum! by gum!"

The readiness to bless upon any little gift being received is not an unpleasant trait in the character of the Achill Islanders. Generally common forms are, "The Lord spare thee, give thee long life, and send thee safe in all thy journeys," and the shorter form of "The Lord spare thee the health;" while a noticeable variation is, "He that brought Peter out of prison, and saved Jonah from the whale's belly, save your soul." Achill Islanders lack not originality!

As soon as the noon has passed, the casual, courteous greeting is always "Good evening!" shewing a precision we are unaccustomed to in England. A wet day is fre-

quently dubbed a "nice saft day," thereby implying a pleasing and pious belief that all that is is for the best. Being vaccinated is singularly spoken of as "being cut for smallpox," a delightfully Irish way of putting it.

One evening at Dooagh we went to some out-of-the-way cabins to distribute tea and clothes to a few of the poorest people, and in particular called upon one old, solitary man whom we knew was not too much loaded down with this world's goods. We found the door of his shanty closed on the outside with latch and padlock, and naturally supposed the occupier was from home. So we took the padlock out of the clasp, it not being locked, and opened the door in order to place a little present inside. To our surprise he was in bed, and was extremely gratified with the gift we brought, praying Heaven and all the saints to reward the donors, and on our leaving he called out after us to be sure and lock the door on the outside. The latch could not possibly be opened from the inside, so the old gentleman evidently depended upon passers-by to lock him in at night and to let him out in the morning, a domestic arrangement of some singularity and also trustfulness.

The hovels or cabins are built of rough beach stones, chipped it may be a little on the exterior, and the roofs are made of sods, locally called "scraws," which, when in position, are dried by blocking up the chimney, or oftener the hole in the roof, and door, and lighting a turf fire inside. These roofs can never be said to be water-tight. Many cabins are devoid of windows, and naturally the floor is as mother earth made it, a luxury being a sprinkling of sea-sand. The average inside measurement is

about 30 by 15 feet, and the height to the beams is roughly 6 feet or less. At one end is the spot on the floor where the turf fire is always kept alight, and the other is the night-abiding place for a mixed collection of animal and bird life, that is, in the cabins of those comparatively wealthy enough to possess them. At one side of the



Cabin interior at Dooagh. The human living end.

dwelling, on a table or rack, are the few eating utensils, opposite which is the bed (only one), usually covered with home-made blankets. A small loft is sometimes constructed above the heads of the cattle for storing fodder and any tools the family may fortunately possess, and where at night cocks and hens find pleasant roosting.



Cabins at Dooagh, Slievemore in the distance.

A small potato patch, or none, around their miserable huts, with the few pounds won by the bread-winners' harvesting in Scotland or the North of England, con-



"A thing of shreds and patches." Dooagh, Achill.

stitute in the majority of cases the whole means of subsistence. And when the bread-winner dies, the family, generally in such cases a large one, is solely dependent

upon the charity of the neighbouring huts, which is, however, as I know, singularly and instructively generous.

From one small hut of rude beach-stones, with turf



A Dooagh Boy, as he called upon us.

("sod") roof, kept down by hay bands or ropes with slung stones, I have repeatedly seen issue in early morning a dozen geese, several hens, a cow and calf, a

horse and colt, one or two pigs, two or more toddling youngsters, one or two youths and maidens, and the father and mother. All had passed the night in a single—by no



Five minutes after. His old clothes in a bundle at his feet.

means large—room, without window, with an open fire-place and with close-shut door, and containing one bed.

The animals are then ushered off by the various

members of the family to their respective walks on the bog, and the night droppings are brought out by the shovelful by the father or eldest boy or girl and deposited on the heap close to the door. Sad all this, of course, but it is unfortunately literally true.

Some cottagers are too poor to have more than fowls or geese; others, again, have only pigs; some are so poor as to possess no live stock at all, and so on.

Abject poverty and the most picturesque and artistic rags I ever saw are the unfortunate rule at Dooagh. One old man came as he is here portrayed (page 355). He did not want any clothing, but asked for an old hat. That was the summit of his ambition.

We annually send abroad large sums to convert and clothe heathen who are not subjects of the King, when something very like the indisputably genuine empire article in every respect can be obtained much nearer home.

The floor of the Achill cabin, as has been said, is simply earth, with, maybe, a sprinkling of sea-sand, which is brought up from the shore in basket panniers on horses' or donkeys' backs, and frequently on women's. These panniers have a trap-door arrangement on the bottom, which falls down on hinges when a wooden pin is released. The sea-sand is also used for bedding the animals at the "farmyard" end of the cabins.

Personal washing appliances, such as jugs and basins and sanitary arrangements, are not fashionable, at least they are—like the first editions of evening newspapers—never seen, and we have never had the luck to see a native taking a voluntary sea bath. In the few slated homes

such luxuries might be found, but we are speaking of the great mass of ordinary Achill cabins. The domestic utensils are of the simplest description and smallest number. Some of the poorer cabins possess nothing worthy of the name of furniture, and nothing in the way of crockery but what would in England be associated with a dust heap.



Going for turf or sea-sand, Achill.

Small hand corn-grinding mills or querns are still to be seen in some of the cabins, but they are now merely mementoes of the days when the oats or rye was ground at home and made into bread. Nowadays, wheat flour is bought and bread made by mixing it with butter-milk,

which supplies the acid, and adding a little carbonate of soda, the resulting carbonic acid gas liberated in the dough causing the bread to rise when baked on a griddle, or even a hot stone. This "soda-bread," as it is called, is made in large circular pieces of about a foot in diameter and an inch thick, and when properly made, without an excess of the carbonate of soda, is exceedingly palatable.

The fire is built up of pieces of turf on the floor, and is never allowed to go out, a pleasant red glow being soon obtained by arranging the pieces in a pyramidal slanting position, and stooping down and gently blowing with the mouth.

The door is usually built facing the east. Some of the slightly better huts have two doors, one also facing due west. The doors seldom face seaward, for the prevailing wind is south-west, and Achill is all the year round a very windy place.

The few attempts at trees, elders, and fuchsia bushes, in the most sheltered spots inland, are all weather-beaten, depressed, and worn down on the south-west. In consequence of the winds the roof has to be tied down with ropes or bands of straw, to which heavy stones are attached, and if in a particularly exposed position an extra wall of large stones has to be built up against the gable ends. The stack of turf, the universal close companion of every cabin, has also to have large stones placed round the base to prevent the pieces being blown away.*

A few slate roofs are making their appearance in Achill; there are now two in Dooagh for instance, and,

* See page 314.

sad to relate, inartistic corrugated iron roofing is being introduced. The railway to Achill Sound, a blessing no doubt, is responsible for the advent of several inartistic novelties.

For tillage purposes and potato-growing deep ditches are cut to drain off the water, and the intervening strips



A make-shift Gate of old barrel, Dooagh, Achill.

of dry bog are used for pedestrians and animal walks. The ends of these, where they abut at right angles to a road, are blocked up to prevent cattle straying or entering from the roadside, with an endless variety of gate substitutes. A properly-made gate hardly exists in Achill. Within a radius of a quarter of a mile at Dooagh may be

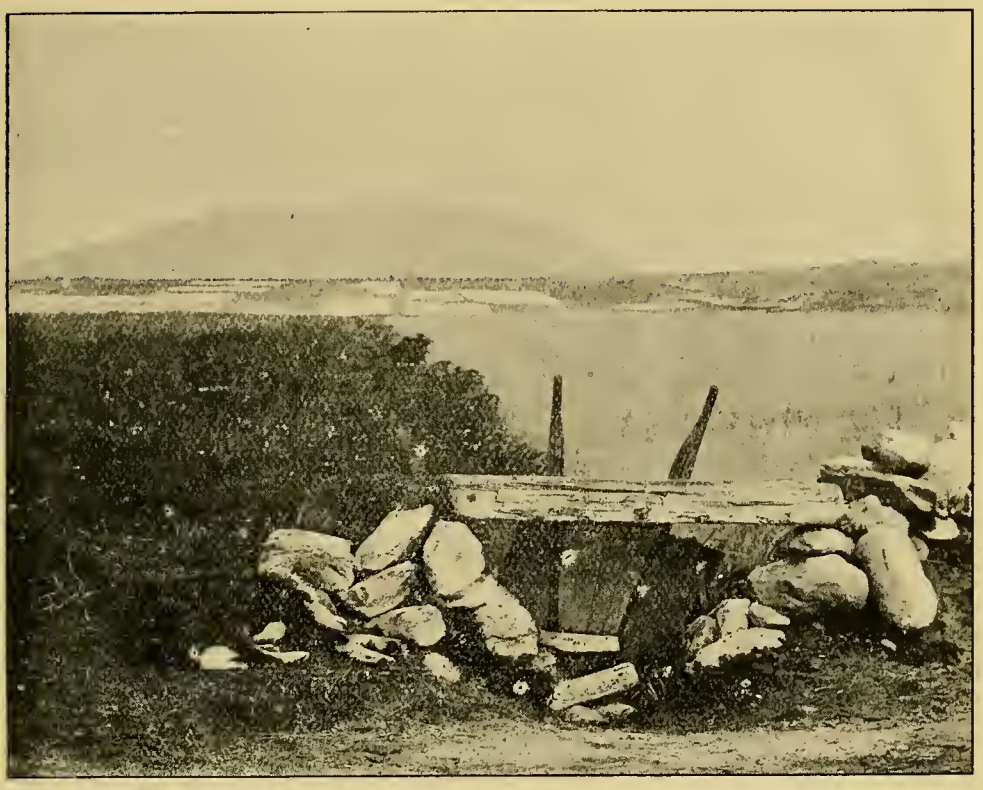
seen a dozen varieties of these comic gates. An old basket horse-pannier, whose proper function in life had been to carry up fish from the shore, or bring turf home from the bog, is placed on one side with a stone or two in front and a piece of wood-wreckage across the top of the gap; an old barrel wedged into the wall between two



A make-shift Gate at Dooagh, Achill. Children interested in the photography.

pieces of odd-sized wood; an old cart-wheel, with remains of the brilliant red paint so much affected by the islanders still visible; an old barrow, wheelless, turned up with the two handles stretched up appealingly against the sky-line, outlined with stones, and held in position by a transverse piece of an old ship's rib; plenty of weird, gnarled pieces of bogwood and tree roots taken out of the

bog, which, in the early dusk, take on themselves extraordinary likenesses to strange, contorted, and ghostly-looking animals. For the passage of a cow or other animal these remarkable structures are taken down and reconstructed afterwards—a matter of time, but then time does not count for much in Achill.



A make-shift Gate at Dooagh, Achill.

Corrymore House, now the property of Mr. Scott, who owns the part of that island, or at any rate has it on a long lease, was once inhabited by the famous Captain Boycott, whose name afterwards gave a new expression to the English language. A lake of considerable extent lies back from the house, higher up in a depression in the mountain's side, and is well stocked with brown or

speckled trout of a good size. Captain Boycott built, too, a house in a lovely situation on a little plateau in the valley at the back of Kim Bay, which was accidentally burnt down, and has not been rebuilt. Many stories are locally current about him. He was a "great" man with horses, and drove tandem along the road from Dooagh,



Boycott's seat on the road to Kim from Dooagh, Achill.

having been known to do so at midnight—a dare-devil performance when one looks down at the terrible declivity on the side nearer the sea. A natural stone seat on the roadside, commanding magnificent views of Kim and the shore, is still associated with him as a spot where he often sat to admire the view.

He left Achill, and it was at another place on the mainland that the intimidation proceedings took place which made his name proverbial.

Kim road was cut out of the precipitous mountain-side in 1831, before which date Kim could only be approached on foot or horseback, and many a pack of tobacco has been carried on men's shoulders over the mountains from the quiet bay which never interviewed excise officers. The tobacco used to be made up in bundles of one, two, or more stone weight, ready strung on shipboard with shoulder-straps to enable the packs to be carried on men's backs without delay on the ship's arrival.

Directly after leaving Dooagh the road begins to ascend, and it goes up, up, then stays on a winding level for a short distance, passes the scratched-out ground whence the boys extract amethysts, and then descends rapidly till it winds over the pointed arched bridge, beneath which a small cascade falls, and so to the beach at Kim Bay.

A more miniaturely perfect bay it were difficult to even imagine or dream of, possessing as it does a fairy-like completeness, and it is only extraordinary that so beautiful a spot is without inhabitants. In the future we can see its green grass slopes spotted with villa residences and with an elaborate hotel in the centre of the valley.

A few ruined cabins and the occasional presence of boys and girls looking after the cattle put out to graze on the neighbouring hills are now the only evidence of human life. Except for the rare visit of Galway trawlermen in the bay (much hated by the natives) and fisher-

men from Dooagh when mackerel or herring "show," the spot is deserted. From an artistic point of view long may this state of things continue.

The strand of fine hard sand is a quarter of a mile across, flanked on either side with rocks of the most exquisite deep purple in patches, where young mussels in myriads present their sharply-joined edges to the unwary hand, and where crabs sprawl about sideways when the tide is low; and behind these banks of rock, or rather chaotically-thrown angular boulders, on either side running out to the south-east, precipitous green-clad cliffs throw out two protecting arms seaward. The sweet, green little valley, running backwards and upwards on the north, would culminate, if you went far enough, in Croaghaun, 2192 feet above the surrounding Atlantic. Beyond that, again, the sheer, stupendous precipices of Saddle Head, the home of wild goats, are lapped by the waves of that ocean between which and America there is nothing but sea.

When we say nothing but sea, that is our personal belief, but not the belief of many of the natives. There is still extant in the hearts of the peasants a leaning to the possibility of the mystic island existing in the Atlantic. Found at times, to be again lost, San Borondon is very real to the imaginative Irish Celt. Some think it is only visible once a year. The idea is a beautiful one, and not alone peculiar to the West of Ireland. The Spaniards had a firm belief in such an island, and it may be that the legend, which is firmly crystallized in Ireland, owes somewhat of its solidity to the Spanish connection with Ireland in past centuries. As shewing how strong

an article of faith it was with the Spaniards, I may mention that in 1519, when the Canary Islands were ceded to Spain by Portugal in the Treaty of Ivora, San Borondon is actually mentioned by name as one of the group by the name *Ilha nao Truvata*—Unfound Island! The faith of the Canarios in its reality took shape in 1526, when an expedition actually left in search of it. They took a holy Franciscan friar to exorcise the evil spirit which rendered this mysterious island invisible, but the island, like spirits from the vasty deep, did not appear when summoned. Yet another expedition in search of San Borondon left as late as 1721, under official direction, from Tenerife with, this time, two chaplains on board, but, alas! it was no use. After these examples of practical faith and belief, who shall say that the Irish are more given to superstition than other nations?

Achill, or the "Eagle" Island, is the largest adjacent to the coast of Ireland, and the bird from which it is named is still to be seen round Croaghaun or Slievemore, but it is rare.

On the east side of Kim Bay, when the tide is out, an angular-entranced cave may be entered, a pool of fresh water at the back explaining the luxuriant existence of a leafy clothing of ferns of many species.

This is the habitat of an interesting mammal—the "sea otter," so called of the natives. The animal comes to drink fresh water in the fern-festooned caves near the sea, and we have seen its innumerable footprints on the muddy floor of this particularly lovely grotto situated amongst the enormous boulders on the storm-swept shore. An occasional member of the species is trapped

here—about four have been taken during the past three years—and these specimens curiously differ from the English species. The Irish otter has even been considered a distinct species from the English on account of the intensity of its colouring, which approaches nearly to black, both on the upper and under surfaces, of the less extent of the pale colour beneath the throat, and because it is essentially a marine animal. But, Irish or English, its devastating nature is well and truthfully summed up in old Izaak Walton's sentence: "The otter devours much fish, and kills and spoils much more than he eats." It were probably more scientifically correct to consider the Irish as merely a marked and marine variety of the English fresh-water animal.

The fur, when dressed, is as soft as the best seal-skin, and makes an exquisite wrap for a lady's adornment. The animal is so rarely captured that the pelts are worth quite a fancy price in the market.

The rocky nature—dangerously rocky nature of the shore round Achill only allows the use of seine nets at a few spots, one being the beautiful stretch of firm sand at Kim Bay. When shoals of fish play here they come into the narrow confines in large numbers, and then the usually deserted cove is alive with say a dozen men and boys—that is a crowd in Achill. Nets, sixty yards in length, are joined together, placed in the stern of, and rowed out in, a canoe, and then allowed to drop by being paid out into the water round the clump. A rope attached to each end at the shore is hauled in, and at last the composite net itself. The arrival of the last pocket on the sand is a moment of intense excitement.

Everyone loses his head and rushes into the edge of the breakers to see what the catch is. Soon a mass of glittering, noisily-flapping life proclaims a catch of mackerel or herring. But mixed with the bulk are always, at Kim, other fish. The writer has helped many a day to "draw the nets" at Kim, and noted on one occasion the presence, besides mackerel in thousands, of six red mullet, one grey mullet, forty flat-fish, and one gurnet. On another occasion the "oddments" proved to be one nine-pound salmon, eighteen large gurnet, two plaice, three large soles, fourteen pollack, one devil-fish, one skate, one conger, eight red mullet, three Sweet Williams, two codling, one turbot—a mixed and very typical Kim bag. The end of the draw of a seine net is one of the rare pleasures of life never to be forgotten.

The drift nets they use for taking mackerel and herring, when they cannot be "drawn" owing to the rocky shore, are suspended in the water by floats of a novel character. They are made out of the skins of sheep gathered into a bladder the size of a football, and tied round a six-inch long, bung-shaped piece of wood. In this plug of wood two holes are made: one at the end to fasten the rope to the float, and so to buoy up the net; the other at the side leading into the interior, through which air is blown to inflate the contrivance. The bladders thus formed are a foot or two in diameter, and, being well tarred or greased, are waterproof. Some, extra large, are balloon-shaped and made in sections of canvas like an overgrown football, and these are tarred inside as well as outside. These rather primitive though very serviceable net-floats are seen in the hands of the fisher-

men in the photograph, where also in the background happened to be a canoe turned upside down (as the manner is) on the shore, looking like a stranded whale.

There are several little streams—you can jump across them all at places—in Achill, and they abound with brown trout up to six and even ten inches in length. The



Achill Fishermen with curious floats.

stream, which enters the sea at the far side of Dooagh, is a delightful bubbling abiding place for trout innumerable. A fly can be thrown at spots, but dapping with a daddy-long-legs or an ordinary earth-worm on a small hook are the best methods for effecting their capture. Fine tackle and thin gut two or three feet before the hook must be



Mouth of the trout stream, Dooagh.



Bridge over trout stream, Dooagh, Achill Island; Slievemore in the distance.

used, and a good deal of skill is required. While one fisher can catch several dozen in an evening, another with an exact duplicate of the apparatus will catch none. Fishing in streams is like pastry-making—some can make pastry, some cannot.

The Dooagh stream flows from the lake at the back up the mountain behind Corrymore House (where formerly Captain Boycott lived). It makes one or two steep descents with much-broken water, where I have caught some of the largest trout, and then meanders in a very serpentine, sharp-curved course along a considerable extent of flat boggy land before again rushing—with here and there one or two lovely deep pools—down a declivity, and so to the pebbly beach of the sea, beneath a picturesque wooden bridge. I know no more lovely walk in Achill than while fishing that stream up and down on a fine summer day. If it rains the fish bite far better, which is a consolation. Corymore Lake also contains the same species of trout, the largest I have taken there being ten inches. These trout were the best, sweetest trout I have ever eaten anywhere, even in Norway and Canada. They are white in flesh, and have no boggy or objectionable flavour at all.

Pollack and mackerel can be caught in abundance with a rod and large white flies with black bodies, or with quickly-revolving spinners on a loaded line from the canoe, and many a large pollack of nine or twelve pounds we have also enticed to leave the sea here on large red rubber imitation sand-eels six inches in length.

With hooks an inch and a half long and a quarter of an inch across at the barbed end, baited with the interior

economy of crabs, retained in position with strands of worsted wound round the unsavoury-looking morsel, rock-fish of several pounds weight, locally known as "gunners," can be caught here in abundance from the rocks. The lead or stone sinker is fixed about fourteen inches from the hooks, and on one of these—a small hook—while there fishing we once caught a heavy conger, four feet six inches in length, that fought well and pluckily for life.

It is not difficult to tell when mackerel are about. The gulls which have been resting on the rocks near get uneasy. One leaves the ledge and goes off with a cry and a "gully, gully." Others follow suit till not one is left. They make a tremendous clamour, and hustle one another over the spot where the mackerel are. Their shrill cries and the beating of their scimitar wings draw other colonies farther away from the scene, and you can see birds coming in frantic haste in clouds from the dim distance. Most people when they discover a gold-mine keep it to themselves. Birds are more charitable, and at once spread abroad the good news. Cormorants—"soldiers" as we usually call them on account of the straight lines they form up in on the rocks—with stiff, outstretched, long necks, flap up as fast as they can and join in the medley and scrimmage. So busy are they all in a solid phalanx that they allow the canoes to go within a yard or two of them. So noisy is the uproar that you can hardly hear yourself speak. Gulls are the gossips and chatterboxes of the ocean. Then suddenly the chirrup of pulsating bird-life rises from the surface of the sea, leaving a frothy patch on the water and a scattering

of grey, white, and dark-brown feathers, and off it goes to another spot close at hand, to which the birds know the fish have gone.

The cormorant (*Phalacrocorax Carbo*) is a remarkably silent bird, but occasionally indulges in a hoarse, harsh, hollow croak. It has a penetrating eye, and views you suspiciously as it sits bold upright on the rocky ledge as the canoe approaches. It is an inveterate glutton, and will gorge itself with fish till quite full up, and is only lazy when its appetite is completely satiated. In fact its greediness has become proverbial, and a voracious eater, a good "trencher-man" as they say in Ireland, is often compared to this bird.

The bird seems never to have had a fair chance to get up a reputation. I have no doubt it is no worse than other birds, and has been terribly maligned. Milton even compares Satan to a cormorant, a fateful and ominous comparison for any bird:—

> "Thence up he flew; and on the tree of life,
> The middle tree, and highest there that grew,
> Sat like a cormorant."

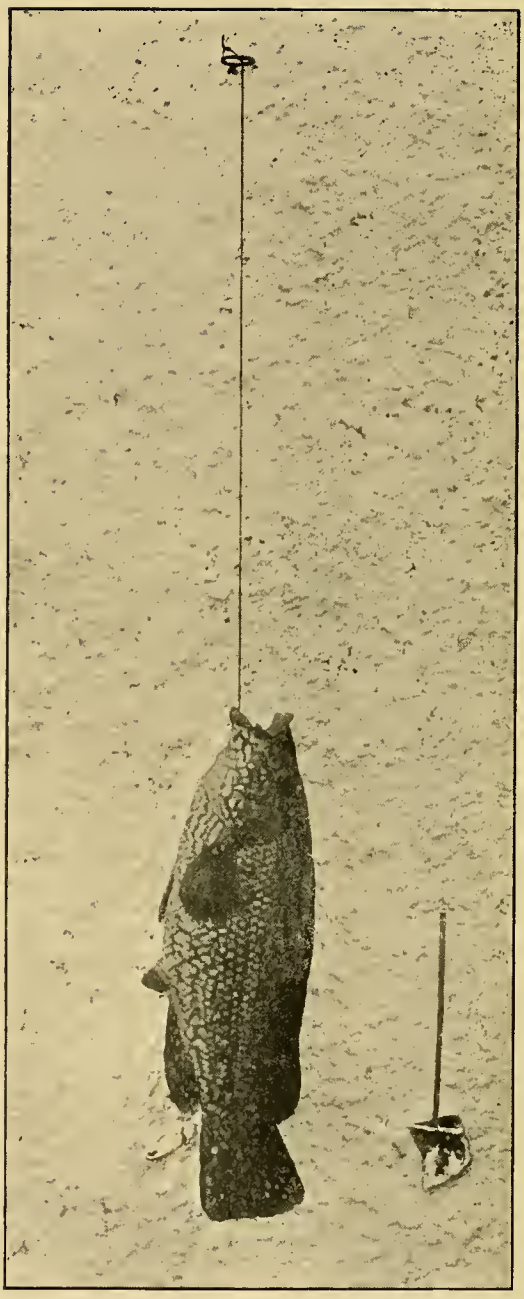
Milton, however, displays a wonderful knowledge of natural history, for he knew what few probably now know, that cormorants breed inland as well as on the seaside rocks. At Gort, in the south of County Galway, some cormorants build in trees on an island in Lough Cooter. This spot is ten miles in a direct line from the nearest sea, but here they build and rear their young in close proximity to a large colony of rooks. Curiously enough, on another island on the same Lough is a heronry. The

owner very thoughtfully prohibits anyone molesting these interesting birds.

Gulls do not seem to eat the mackerel—I have watched them closely for hours at sea while fishing and never seen a mackerel in their mouths—but the small fish, an inch or an inch and a half in length, like whitebait, which the mackerel throw up out of their mouths. The excitement of the birds at the surface of the water probably causes this regurgitation through nervousness. It is most usual for a mackerel to disgorge one or two of these small fry, when landed in the canoe, as you take the hook out of its mouth; in fact we found these strangely-obtained little fish very handy and effective for bottom fishing for whiting. Probably, too, the mackerel drive up from the lower depths of the sea myriads of these small fish, and this fact the gulls and sea-birds know.

Is it sight or smell which enables these watchers and scavengers of the sea so marvellously able to detect the presence of fish? My observations would point to both faculties being developed to a degree we humans cannot understand. Or have they some other sense we possess not? Not unlikely.

Our knowledge of things outside our little ken of sense is small—probably very small indeed did we but know it. Our senses are probably infinitesimal compared with the aggregate of senses of beings even on this world of ours. We judge too much of other beings by our own physical imperfection. We can't run as fast as a horse; we can't jump as high as a flea in proportion to our size; we certainly can't fly; we have no power of scent comparable to that possessed by a dog; we have no sight like the



"Gunner," or "Rock-fish" (*Labrus*), re-caught after ten minutes with hook and snood in mouth. The rule by side is a 6-inch one.

vulture. As Huxley said, with great truth, there may be "kinds of existence which we are not competent so much as to conceive," and so it may be that the certainly wonderful knowledge possessed by gulls and cormorants as to the whereabouts of fish, and these birds' power of conveying the knowledge to others at vast distances, may be to them the ordinary usage of faculties we have no knowledge of.

Of one thing I am as nearly certain as it is possible to be. Fish, I am convinced, experience nothing at all of what we designate "pain." I have repeatedly caught fish just after they have been severely hooked and lost. I lost a large "gunner" (6 lbs.) with a big hook and six inches of snooding attached, and ten minutes afterwards landed the same fish on another hook. I could give similar instances regarding nearly every fish that takes the hook, and every fisherman (salt or fresh) will endorse my statement. The *Fishing Gazette* is a perfect *repertoire* of facts pointing to the same conclusion. Trout I have caught with *several* hooks in one fish! If these hooks in their mouths cause pain, surely they would rush away from the scene of the disaster—but they do not!

Keel, on the south side of the island, has probably a future before it, if ever the railway is continued there from Achill Sound. With a southern aspect, in a deeply-indented bay, and with a fine, firm strand of sand—a hundred or more yards in width when the tide is out—immediately backed by a lofty pebble ridge, the two-and-a-half mile stretch of Keel Bay would make an ideal watering-place. No spot probably in the British Isles presents such an opportunity for the wise, far-seeing

speculator. The name of Keel is derived from the Irish word, and alludes to the strip of land between lake and sea, the strand at Keel being separated from Keel Lake by a wide stretch of flat grassy and sandy land.

On the east of the bay the verdant Isle of Inishgalloon, with its rounded contour, pierced through with a remarkable daylight cave at present inhabited solely by a few sheep, the happy home of innumerable gulls, red-beaked and footed oyster-catchers, and curlew, is an unfailing agreeable picture. The west of Keel Bay is bounded by the wonderful Minawn Cliffs, "Cathedral Rocks," as they are called, 1530 feet in height, of Gothic arches and delightful pools, where small marine life luxuriates, these alone constituting an attraction worth a long journey to see. And then the large lake close to the shore in the background, where sea-trout are found in fair abundance and size, and surrounding sandy littoral, with natural bunkers placed just in the right spots to make this the future site of ideal golf-links. And the distant views in front looking seaward, or back looking inland! All magnificent, under every variety of atmospheric colouring. Mighty Croaghaun, rearing his head in sublime majesty when the dry wind has cleared the mists away, which usually lovingly linger round, bringing his presence surprisingly near; or when enveloped in fleecy-white masses, or when thunderously black-looking, always a picture beauteous to behold.

Conical-shaped Slievemore (2204 feet), a nearer neighbour in the background, close enough in fine weather to enable the heather to be discerned in masses of many varieties of rich purple hue, interspersed with vivid green



Ancient "Bee-hive" cabin, Keel, Achill Island.

patches, and shewing the square little bits of tillage around its base, is about as restful a view as can anywhere be seen. The smooth beach of fine firm sand, of vast extent, of most deceptive distances, would make a paradise for children, a magnificent race-course, or fashionable promenade—and there is room for all these together. In the front of the bay, dreamy veil upon veil of distant mountains down Connemara way, with the intervening islands, make the seaward prospect delightful.

The stream from the lake meanders in changeful, serpentine tracks at its leisure through the sand, and a cascade of good drinking water from the cliffs at the west end of the bay make that spot a perfect place for a picnic; and driftwood of all kinds, waifs and strays from the sea caught in the pebble ridge is in almost inexhaustible quantity.

The little village of Keel, of the usual promiscuously-placed Achill huts, slated inn, and small concrete, and absolutely useless harbour, contains one object of especial interest.

The oldest cabin in Achill, probably in Co. Mayo, is situated close to the sea. Unlike all other Achill cottages, it has rounded corners and a pole in the centre supporting the turf roof, the only attempt at a window being a hole in the roof of about six inches diameter. The rounded shape shews the structure to belong to another and a much older time altogether. It is, in short, one of the very old "bee-hive" huts which centuries ago were common all over Ireland.

The Doega district of Achill is very reminiscent of

Norway. It is much fretted by the sea, and has narrow gorges at places, in one picturesque spot the old road



A gorge near Doega, Achill. The old road is in the foreground, the new in the background.

following the contour of the ground is seen—now deserted save by pack-animals—and the new road spanning the declivity by a bridge is the usual modern route.

CHAPTER XXII.

Coronation Time at Dooagh, Achill Island.

I know there is a widespread feeling in England that the Irish are at heart most disloyal to the Crown. That they are "agin the Governmint" is, of course, proverbial, and one thing; but that they are disloyal to the Crown, as distinguished from the local powers that be, is another. Certain Irishmen deliberately foster and encourage disloyalty. In many cases they even come to imagine that the sentiment really exists for their own personal and party purposes. But the real Irish Celt—the poor peasant—is, in my humble opinion, at heart loyal to the persons of the present King and Queen. When Queen Victoria was reigning the case was different. She visited Scotland so frequently and Ireland never, that no wonder, as a great personality, she was nothing to the Irish; they never grasped her goodness and individuality. It was not their fault. The Irish are, and always have been, hero-worshippers—they must worship, it is in their nature. The visits of the King to Ireland have done more to put down sedition than all the gas of the House of Commons, whether emanating from the windbags on one side of the House or the other. The people have *seen* the King, or seen their friends who have seen him, and—a very, very great and—they like him and Queen Alexandra. Yes, the peasants, at any rate, of Connemara and

the West of whom I am writing are loyal. Let me illustrate this. I happened to be staying at Dooagh, the poorest village in Achill Island, as I have pointed out, which is only another way of saying the poorest and most squalid village in all Ireland, during the Coronation time. I will relate as simply as I can what actually took place on that, the most westerly village in the British Isles, on that memorable night—a night, I venture to say, which will be handed down traditionally as a great event for many, many generations.

Knowing that we should be there during the Coronation time we took with us some simple night-light illuminations of the usual old-fashioned coloured-glass cup description, and the initials "E. R." worked out in wire in the same, and these, with a crown and Prince of Wales' feather and Japanese lanterns, we affixed to the front and windows of the little house—the only house, bar the public-house, with a slate roof in Dooagh. When evening came I suppose the whole village—men, women, and children (in arms and out)—gathered together in the courtyard, cut out of solid bog around the house, and on the adjacent road. I had sent round a general invitation. The inhabitants responded—a quiet, shy, orderly, well-mannered crowd, soft spoken, and with bare feet. The children ranged themselves in the front, the elders behind them.

It was a strange, weird scene, the most westerly spot in the British Isles where the King's Coronation was celebrated, for Dooagh is the most westerly village in Achill. The inhabitants had never before in their lives seen anything in the shape of illuminations.

We distributed pea-soup in teacups—our commissariat did not run to luxuries—weak whisky-and-water amongst the men, sweets amongst the children. The King's touching letter to the nation was read to the crowd by the light from the lanterns, and listened to with the most breathless, almost painfully breathless, attention. When the illness and happy recovery of the King had been explained to them a sigh of relief one could not help hearing arose all around, right out to the edges of the crowd and into the shadows and darkness of the road beyond. And in "God save the King" that crowd of bare-headed, bare-footed, ragged, beautifully-eyed men, women, and children joined with quiet, deep feeling and genuine fervour. In three cheers for the King, followed by the same for the Queen, they also joined. A more personally-attached people to the King and Queen all of our party felt did not exist in the British Isles. And at the end, about midnight, when told that the exciting festivities were over—for we had had dances and songs—that crowd dispersed, as if by magic, in a quiet, orderly way, not one single person hanging about the house, and we could not help spontaneously saying to one another that a more truly delightful, innocent, and novel entertainment we had never had.

A casual tourist—many of whose congeners go to Achill—rushing through the island and never troubling to know or study the inhabitants, said to me one day afterwards, on seeing the decorations still standing, "Do you mean to say the people allowed those to remain up?" The insinuation contained in the remark is unfortunately typical. Those decorations remained up till we left, and

not one was once broken, touched, or even interfered with in any way whatsoever.

The King's own impression of what the people thought of him after his visit to Ireland was expressed in his letter, dated August 1st, 1903, addressed "To my Irish People." He says :—

"I desire, on leaving Ireland, to express to my Irish people how deeply I have been touched by the kindness and goodwill which they have shewn to the Queen and myself.

"Our experience on previous visits had, indeed, prepared us for the traditional welcome of a warm-hearted race. But our expectations have been exceeded. Wherever we have gone, in town or country, tokens of loyalty and affection, proffered by every section of the community, have made an enduring impression on our hearts.

"For a country so attractive and a people so gifted, we cherish the warmest regard, and it is, therefore, with supreme satisfaction that I have, during our stay, so often heard the hope expressed that a brighter day is dawning upon Ireland.

"I shall eagerly await the fulfilment of this hope. Its realization will, under Divine Providence, depend largely upon the steady development of self-reliance and co-operation ; upon better and more practical education; upon the growth of industrial and commercial enterprise ; and upon that increase of mutual toleration and respect which the responsibility my Irish people now enjoy in the public administration of their local affairs is well fitted to teach.

"It is my earnest prayer that those and other means of national well-being may multiply from year to year in Ireland, and that the blessings of peace, contentment, and prosperity may be abundantly vouchsafed to her."

During the evening we had our room full of the natives, and I shewed them some conjuring tricks—that most ancient of all tricks, the vanishing man in the cloak, the Chinese rings, the cone through the hat, unlimited

eggs from a handkerchief, and so on. They had never in their lives before seen anything at all approaching a conjuring trick. The silence was intense; they were too interested to speak; they scarcely drew their breath; their eyes—those wonderful Irish eyes—were glued upon me in eloquent amazement. Never had a conjuror such an awfully appreciative audience. The only remark I heard was one man saying to another that if he could do those things "sorra a day's work" would he be doing again, but would go round the fairs and patterns and make his fortune. I noticed I was looked at rather askance by the children and many of the peasants after that conjuring show for several days. Often by the roadside I would be stopped and asked quite abruptly a question concerning some stage in the performance of a trick, shewing how the ingenious Irish mind had never ceased trying to puzzle the problem out.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Achill Island Sea Fishing: An Evening's Sport, Dooagh.

It had rained all the day before.

We had been compelled to stay indoors and play cards and grumble, for, though moderately ardent fishers, we were not sufficiently keen on the sport to endure getting wet through for its sake.

But this morning being fine, with a fresh, clean feeling in the soft, balmy Irish air, two of us took light trout-rods and wandered up the gurgling, boggy-yellow stream, quite close to the house, and before the praties had turned soft, when tried with a fork for the midday meal, thirty-one pretty speckled yellow trout and two small eels were hanging with a string through their gills on a nail in the turf-smoked kitchen.

The boggy stream banks, where not stony, had proved very soft and spongy, which the array of boots and stockings before the turf fire in the keeping-room sufficiently demonstrated. The water had been higher, more swirly, with more of those delicious whirlpools, with a concentric twirling crust of soapy, yellow-looking bubbles on each, under which the trout love to lie.

The rain on the previous day was still coming down the stream from mighty Croaghaun. It had not been a day for the fly, and the common garden earth-worm had

accounted for all the stringful on the kitchen wall, and Letty's bit of cork being too high up on the line explained how the two eels came into the category.

The midday siesta of the usual loafing species had come and gone.

The Achill cat had done licking her chops after placing herself outside a live trout, which she had well "played" first, and which seemed about the only food suitable to her delicate Achill internal organization, and we had begun to look up each his or her own peculiar arrangement of hooks and lines for the evening sport.

Then at about six o'clock (this was in August) John and Martin turned over the canoe, got underneath it, and walked down to the shore over the big, chaotically-arranged boulder rocks here constituting the shore, they, with their heads and shoulders inside the boat, looking all the while just like an erratic, earth-stranded whale on its way to the sea.

Depositing the "can-know" gently, very gently, on one side (for frailty is its terribly obtrusive feature), they turned it over, and pitched down the two pair of primitive paddles and antediluvian thole-pins.

John got in and was pushed off. The rest of us, each hugging his own fishing impedimenta, scrambled down to a rock jutting out into the sea, whence John, by backing in, took us off one at a time.

No little skill is required to just bring the stern up close to the rock without actually touching it, in order to embark or disembark passengers, the frail, canvas-covered canoe being to the stones what the egg is to the china bowl.

However, the sea was moderately calm, with no sea-horses visible, and only a long, rhythmic swell and an oily surface after yesterday's rain.

A perfect day for fishing, with the harvest moon to enlighten us for a time when the glorious sun had set, leaving behind his mantle of myriad-coloured hues as he dived into the wide Atlantic behind precipitous Achill Head.

We first paddled along the shore with one rod out, having two fathoms of salmon-line and a white fly with black body, about three-quarters-of-an-inch hook, on six inches of salmon-gut. Directly we went over the margin of sandy bits, bordering on dark, sea-weedy spots, the pollack rose to the hook, tumbling over one another in their eagerness to catch the fly.

After taking twenty-three we voted the sport tame and took the rod in, while John and Martin paddled straight out to the breaming-ground. We tried the first ground, about five hundred yards out, keeping the white gable of the cottage squarely in front of us.

Here we let drop an anchor-stone with some fifteen fathoms of coarse rope attached. We used ordinary mackerel-line and a very light sinker, eight inches from which was the hook on four inches of twisted gut.

We reached the bottom at about six fathoms, and then drew up the lines about a foot off the bottom. Our bait was the inside of the ordinary eatable crab, placed round and concealing the hook, and held in position by winding a bit of worsted round the unsavoury-looking lump.

No sooner were our four lines down than nibbling began. Quick jerks, quick pulls-in became now frequent.

Frequent also were the misses.

Often the fish appeared above the water, sometimes up to the gunwale, but on lifting it into the boat would go off the hook with a splash. When with the sweeping lift the bream were swung into the boat—then, "Hands off!"

The sharp spine on the back is like a needle, and the fish in its strong flappings on the hook seems to know just how to drive it into your hand, if you incautiously catch hold of it.

The best plan is to grip the fish between your knees, which should be clad in tarpaulin trousers, when you can easily extract the hook, letting the fish drop to the bottom of the boat after the operation.

The next best plan is to swing the fish under the left arm and hold it there; but Florrie, who did her fair share of the fishing, not being clad suitably for either of these operations, put her foot firmly down on the fish, getting a purchase just behind the head.

Two fair-sized horse-mackerel, or scad, were also drawn up on the bream-hooks.

The bream were all about the same size, from two pounds to four pounds—chiefly two pounds—none smaller, and we caught fifty-three in a short time.

Three other boats were occupied at the same sport close to us, and we noticed that each of our Limerick hooks—the black ones, an inch long—landed just five or six bream to one landed by the hooks employed by the natives, which were of the antiquated galvanised wide kind, from which bream seem to unhook themselves with the greatest facility.

The enormous superiority of our bream-killing appa-

ratus became so known in Dooagh that several of the fishermen asked us to sell them hooks, one man offering us a shilling for one hook, and when we made gifts of them they expressed themselves better pleased than if we had given them drams—their most expressive way of shewing the value of the gifts.

More sea-bream are caught proportionately to each boat when several boats are bottom-fishing close to one another. The quantity of bait around a small area of the sea's bottom seems to attract shoals of the fish and keeps them hovering around. Fish, even more than sheep, follow one another, and go astray, to the advantage of the fisher. I never pull in two mackerel-lines together. Always leave a fish on, and the others will follow suit.

The bream is a gentle nibbler at first, when you must give him time—a second or two—to suck at the soft morsel; then, when you think his mouth has arrived close to the hook, give a short, sharp jerk up and you may have him—or not. If you miss him pull up your hook, for you will most likely find your bait quite gone, or nearly so. Fresh bits of squid we found a good bait for bream, with the advantage of remaining longer intact on the hook. But now it was 8.30, and the bream were ceasing to bite—it is surprising how suddenly they cease feeding—so we "up anchor" and moved on to another spot in the bay, over a bank whence we could see the lights in the handy-man's cottage to the north and also the beach, at the bottom of a cave to the east.

We anchored again in about twelve fathoms of water, and got out our conger lines. The moon was now sailing

over towards Achill Head, making a glorious angels' path on the surface of the oily water as it rose and fell in long undulations.

The water lapping the canoe's bows gently rippled away in a streaky blaze of phosphorescent silver, the peculiar quietness immediately around and the clearness with which you could hear the surge roaring away on the rocks a great distance off being singularly reminiscent of the Norway fiords.

We had three lines out with a one-pound sinker on each, from which, at a foot's distance, was a long-shanked (four and a-half inch), elegant, bronzed steel hook, the width across the barbed end (outside measurement) being one and a-quarter inch. The hook was attached to snooding, around which we had twined metal gimp, and then to a swivel, on the other end of which the line commenced with a loop large enough for the hand to be inserted.

We found in practice that these hooks were so long in the shank that we could have dispensed altogether with the gimp, no conger that we caught biting on the snooding.

We baited two with the guts of the scads we had just caught, threaded up on the shanks of the hooks with the heads of the same nearer the barbs, and the other line was baited with the bodies of crabs smashed up soft with the policeman-staff-like disgorger.

It takes a little time for conger to smell the bait and gather round at the bottom of the sea, and Florrie, who sat on the stroke-seat facing me at the stern, and with John beside her, broke the silence with, "The fish are very slow to-night," a remark which John took as some

mild sort of reflection upon himself or his birthplace, for he rejoined, "Well, in these parts we say the three fastest fish in the sea are mackerel, seal, and ——" when "Look out!" I cried, for I felt a tremendous strain on my hand, and I began hauling for all I was worth. My surmise that I had a big fish on was more correct than John's natural history, and the interruption may have saved him from making another innocent mistake. We never heard what the third "fish" was, for he too began hauling in with might and main.

Hauling hand over hand, and occasionally resting by tightening the line on the edge of the boat when the fish gave an extra strong plunge, digging my nails into the line to prevent it slipping through my fingers, I called to Florrie to "stand by" with the disgorger, for I knew it would be wanted.

John was breathing hard, and in the dim light I could, out of the corner of my eye, see him with his knees pressed against the gunwale, pulling back into the boat with his body well down. The severe strain on the port side almost brought the gunwale under water.

Nearly worn out I craned my head over a moment to see if the end was near. Some two or three fathoms down in the dark water were two huge phosphorescent balls like immense electric arc-lamps, eloquently giving a forecast of what was to come.

John stood up first, leaned over, and, with a gasp and both hands, heaved a terribly vivid, bright, writhing mass over the gunwale. It was a monster conger. Its huge body flapped right and left, and it dashed over the other side of the canoe. By a backward pull he got the beast

down again in the boat, and getting his left hand into the loop above the swivel, he held the creature's head well up while he rained blows upon it with the butt-end of the twenty-one-inch disgorger in his right.

I had meanwhile managed to get over the side into the boat another huge conger, and telling Florrie to sit still and not stand up, I began belabouring it as its long, strong body alternately lashed round her and my legs. The disgorger, a massive, heavy weapon of hard wood, was now all over blood and difficult to hold. My arm ached, and the blows and screams of the two fish—for large conger can make a queer unearthly noise—could have been heard for a considerable distance over the oily phosphorescent surface of the sea.

The scene must have been indescribably weird could we have had time to have observed it, but the intense excitement prevented anything of a reflective nature; Florrie, with commendable pluck, sitting quite cool with her petticoats gathered tightly round her legs; the two huge monsters, ghastly luminous, twirling round on the hooks as their heads were held up, and their bodies lashing with fury on either side of her; the noise of the hard blows and the gathering darkness over the sea, for by now the moon had disappeared.

Shifting the hold of the conger to the right hand, with my left I loosed my Norwegian knife from my hip-pocket, and, holding the head of the brute against the edge of the seat, I inserted the point just behind the head on the neck and pushed it well home into the spine, after which the gyrations of the animal became perceptibly less vigorous.

Passing my knife "forrard" to John, he acted as I had done, and we all felt happier and more comfortable in the boat. Still, the two serpent-like fish went on wriggling, but the snap of their jaws was no longer dangerous as they writhed on the floor of the boat, and we only had occasionally to club them as they rose snake-like towards the gunwale. Using now the V-cleft, thin end of the useful disgorger, we soon had the hooks out, and, re-baiting them, flung the tackle overboard.

That night, in the turf-smoked kitchen, we measured those two congers. Having no tape measure, Letty, who knew her height to a fraction, volunteered to have the bigger one held up against her "back to back." The monster, that which John had caught, just topped her hair with its tail touching the stone floor, and Letty's height is exactly five feet six inches. The other conger was about a foot shorter. But besides those two monsters, caught almost simultaneously, before we left the bank, with the same tackle and bait, we caught one ling of over 20 lbs. weight, three more congers, and one dog-fish.

Our arms ached for days after from the clubbing, and our fingers were tired from the strain of hauling the wet lines. The largest conger we split open, removed the backbone, slightly salted and dried the body in the sun on the roof of a neighbouring turf-covered hovel, and its carcass, in pieces, soaked and boiled, afforded in London a change to enliven the monotony of our local fishmonger's supply.

During our stay at Dooagh we invented what will be henceforth known as the "Pollack Destroyer," so dubbed

by John, who had never before seen such execution among the fish, and he had lived there all his life. This rather gruesomely-named apparatus consisted of some three fathoms of salmon-line, with seven flies on the end, each on six inches of strong gut at intervals of six inches. On one occasion, with a sweep of this arrangement, we landed into the canoe six pollack and a large mackerel on the tail fly—seven fish in all. I had discarded the top joint of my sea-rod, and it was well I had done so, for no top could have stood the strain, the pollack being all as large as herrings and the mackerel a large fish. With this dwarfed rod and the same series of flies we frequently took catches of four, five, and six at a time. We made the flies ourselves—white goose feathers, black worsted for the bodies, on Limerick black hooks three quarters of an inch long. I tried the twin-hook, but it caught no better than the single species, and it had the disadvantage of causing loss of time, being more difficult to extract from the fish's mouth.

To convey some idea of the excellent mixed sea-fishing one can enjoy round the coast of Achill, I may as well give samples of the actual catches made there, with the dates. Each of these day's results was entered up at the time, and therefore they are not on a par with the usual "fishy" stories. I do not quote them as being in any way phenomenal, for anyone can go there and do likewise. I am not like the man who, telling remarkable tales of the gigantic monsters he had caught, provoked the good-humoured suggestion from one of his audience that he must have been fishing for whales, smartly replied, "No, sir, we were using whales as bait." No,

the *size* of the fish we caught was normal, but the number was, to our party at any rate, more than we had expected. We were fully satisfied with our bags. Very likely other fishers of the sea at other places in Ireland have done far better.

Here, then, are some actual results: Dooagh, August 17th, in one and three-quarter hours, on two lines, red rubber eels for bait, pollack 8¾ lbs., 9¾ lbs., 7¼ lbs., 7¼ lbs., 5 lbs., 4 lbs., 3 lbs., 8 mackerel; August 18th, 50 bream, 3 mackerel, 1 conger; August 19th, 23 pollack, 5 conger (10 lbs. to 18 lbs.), 1 ling (20 lbs.), 3 mackerel, 3 horse-mackerel; August 20th, 10 mackerel, 18 gurnet, 2 plaice, 14 pollack. Kim Bay, September 10th, 105 pollack, 6 mackerel. Total at Dooagh and Kim Bay, from August 12th to September 11th—pollack 1526, trout 211, bream 304, scad 9, mackerel 30.

Someone will probably say: "What could you possibly do with all this fish?" We made good use of them—wasted none. We used to take them round in pailfuls to the poor cabins, and most thankful the inmates were for the welcome supply of food.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Grace O'Malley, the Woman Pirate of Achill.

The female pirate of Achill Island, Grace O'Malley, lived and pirated in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and no more romantic personage illuminated a reign singularly remarkable for the extraordinary number of its great men and women. Then for the first time in the nation's history arose that love of enterprise and adventure which, developing ever since, has made this Empire the mightiest the world has ever seen—an Empire to-day of 400 million souls.

The spirit of the time, with its feverish unrest and taste for adventure, found expression on the extreme west of Ireland in the exploits of an intrepid wild Irish girl.

Her father, Owen O'Malley, a mighty chief in County Mayo, died, leaving his daughter in the dangerous position of a local queen, adored by her people as much for her beauty, spirit, and pluck as for her being her father's heiress and successor.

Proud and imperious she certainly was, and she ruled her realm of Achill Island and Clare, with the neighbouring mainland thrown in, as absolutely as Elizabeth did over her far larger dominions. The two women had much in common. Both were impulsive and despotic, impatient under restraint of any kind, excessively gene-

rous when it suited the whim of the moment, cruel and relentless when baulked or when championing a cause—no matter whether a just or an unjust one.

The characters of each were, no doubt, considerably moulded by the isolated positions they occupied, and by the remarkable times in which they lived. Each occupied a pedestal in her sphere of activity, and stirring events revolved around both Grace and Elizabeth. There all resemblance ceases.

Elizabeth's love of flirtation, if only for her country's sake, was merely a disease like an intermittent fever.

Grace O'Malley had many suitors, some of whom, attracted by her fame, came from what was in those days vast distances to sue; but she eventually gave her heart, with her hand, to the young chieftain of Ballynahinch, Co. Galway, with the terrible-looking name of Domhnall-an-chogaidh O'Flaherty.

He was a tall, stalwart Irishman, with whom she lived in perfect harmony and happiness till his death. Well had it been for her had he lived longer, but then there would have been nothing so particularly romantic to record about her career.

Accustomed from childhood in her island home to the sea and boating, and having at no time in her life any love of the Saxon rule, she found in the excitement of an adventurous life a means of preventing her mind from dwelling too much upon her loss. What was taken from the Saxon and other foreigners was, in her eyes and those of her followers, not robbery, but merely justifiable annexation, and so she waged, on and off, for some forty years, an incessant and apparently unmolested warfare



Grace O'Malley's Castle, Achill Island. The mountain is on the mainland, Co. Mayo, Achill Straits between.

upon passing vessels from the strongholds which she built.

Her ships were the scourge of the western seas. She would sweep out of apparently inaccessible precipices, through raging seas, and seize the richly-laden galleon vainly attempting to beat up out of her clutches. To strip it of all valuables and as readily disappear with the loot into her adjacent stronghold was an easy matter.

The castle at Achill Sound—Kildownet Castle, to give it its title, considerable remains of which are even now visible, so strongly was it built—was her principal fortress.

Near to it is an ancient graveyard, where it is the custom to leave pipes on the graves after funerals, as at Salruck.

The rectangular tower of the castle has stood the stress of wave and storm for over three centuries, and its massive walls have a good life in them yet. If they could only speak, what accounts of Spanish doubloons and ducats, of rich stuffs and priceless fabrics, of embroideries, of gold and silver drinking-cups, ornaments and trinkets we should hear! Who knows but even now, in hidden and long-forgotten vaults, secret hoards lie hid! The ground shews no signs of any excavation.

The castle simply defied any attack that in those days could possibly be made. The position, alone on the south side of the Sound, on a slight promontory, quite hidden from the outer sea, was lovely. The views of the mountains of County Mayo in front are superb, while the seascapes at the mouth of the Sound are unsurpassed for wild splendour. Ships might pass and repass a short distance outside in Clew Bay, and never for a moment

guess that a passage for ships existed inland. Such a strong and awfully dangerous current sweeps through the Sound at each tide that even now, in these days of accurate soundings and Admiralty charts, mariners prefer to give this narrow passage a wide berth. In those days probably not a soul outside of Grace O'Malley's retainers and crews would even attempt to venture within the Sound.

The cleverness and strategic ability in building the castle at this precise spot are apparent, while the unparalleled loveliness of the position must also have appealed to her Irish sense of beauty in Nature. Her men, knowing every inch of the waterway north and south, could sail their ships and emerge suddenly from the Sound, either in the waters of Clew Bay on the south or Black Sod Bay on the north, just as information reached the pirate leaderess of prey being there sighted. Once in her stronghold she defied capture—on the sea side she was absolutely secure, and from the land side only an enormous and well-equipped army could have caused her trouble, and, even if sent, an army would have to be landed on the island, in those times an impossibility.

Queen Elizabeth was much too occupied to devote a large portion of the nation's forces to suppress this remarkable woman of whom she was frequently hearing. Messages, however, must have passed between the two. Elizabeth's curiosity was aroused, and she desired to see Grace. The descendant of the O'Malleys was as proud and imperious as the English Queen. Probably the female pirate's desire to meet Elizabeth was just as strong; at any rate, Grace O'Malley crossed over to

England with a numerous retinue and much pomp, and made the personal acquaintance of the great monarch. No record of what took place at that meeting of those extraordinary women is extant, and therefore imagination can have full play.

Tradition—and there is plenty current about her in the West of Ireland—has embellished her visit to the great English Queen, and that, too, somewhat minutely—too carefully perhaps, we fear, for exact truth's sake. The dresses of the two remarkable women are even delineated. The meeting is said to have taken place at Hampton Court. "Fancy," says Otway, an old writer on Ireland, "Grana in her loose attire, consisting of a chemise, containing thirty yards of yellow linen wound round her body, with a mantle of freize, coloured madder-red, flung over one shoulder, with her wild hair twisted round a large golden pin as her only headgear, standing with her red legs unstockinged and her broad feet unshod before the stiff and stately Tudor, dressed out, as we see her represented in the portraits of that day, with stays, stomacher, and farthingale, cased like an impregnable armadillo."

The fact remains that, in spite of her black record, Grace O'Malley got safely away from the Queen's clutches, no small achievement in itself, shewing she possessed considerable powers of persuasion and diplomacy. Other contumacious personages lost their heads—physically as well as metaphorically—before they had done with the English Queen. Grace certainly did not the former, and, from what we know of her self-possession, probably not even the latter.

On her way home she landed at Howth, and, as was usual in those days, proceeded to Howth Castle to claim hospitality. It happened to be the hour of dinner, but the castle gates were closed. So shocked was she at this exclusion, most repugnant to her Western notions of Irish hospitality, that she at once returned to the shore, where the young lord was playing with his nurse, and, seizing the child, she immediately re-embarked and sailed with him round the north coast to her Achill home.

After a considerable time and much negotiation she at last allowed the child to return to his parents, but only upon the express stipulation that the gates of Howth Castle should ever afterwards be kept open during the dinner-time—a custom observed to this day. So did she uphold the proverbial apostolic injunction to use hospitality. When looked at in that way, the lesson she taught the lord of Howth Castle may surely be counted unto her for righteousness. The bracing air of Achill was also, no doubt, most beneficial to the young lord.

Finding it extremely difficult for a lone woman to rule men with piratical proclivities, she at last yielded to the importunities of Richard Oileverius Burke and married him. Two children were born to them. The son, Theobald, married Medhbh, daughter of O'Connor Sligo, and the daughter, whose name we do not know, became the wife of one Richard Burke, known to the Saxons as "The Devil's Hook."

To this son-in-law Grace once owed her life when she was in a very tight corner indeed. After the death of her husband in 1586, she went to her castle in Borrisowle (or Burrishoole) on the mainland, with a thousand cows and

mares, and obtained letters of safety from Sir Richard Bingham. He treacherously, on the pretext that she had lately plundered Arran, seized her, and after a drumhead court-martial, condemned her to death. A gallows was actually built, and she was bound with a rope and a noose placed around her neck, when "The Devil's Hook" appeared on the scene, and vowed terrible retribution if the sentence were carried into execution. This, coupled with promises of complete restitution, at last prevailed on Sir Richard Bingham, and he released her. With her son-in-law she then fled to Ulster, and lived with O'Neill and O'Donnell, being unable to return to Achill, as all her ships had been taken by Bingham.

Having poured her tale of woe into the ears of Elizabeth, urging advancing age and a desire to cease from evil living, the Queen, through Sir John Perrot, granted her a complete pardon, and she returned to Achill, where she died, and was buried on Clare Island.

Broughton describes her as "a notable traitress and nurse of all rebellions in the province for forty years," which only shews how powerful she must have been; and, after all, he is only voicing the opinion of her enemies. The O'Malleys, Malleys, or Maleys, as they are variously called, are to this day the purest types of Irish men and women in Achill, and are very proud of their descent.

Her name has become proverbial in Ireland as the Irish equivalent of Boadicea, an air is called after her, and one of the many Irish pet names, when children are addressed by their mothers, is a son or daughter of "Grania Waile" or "Grania Uaile"—the native form of Grace O'Malley.

The stories about this fascinating personality all over the West of Ireland are endless. They are nearly all traditional, and probably most untrustworthy. Still, be that so, they demonstrate in the clearest manner the undying halo of romance which has ever been associated with her name. Good stories do not crystallize around insignificant, milk-and-water, nondescript persons. It is the strong, strenuous characters for good or evil that mark the ages. A few modern names, around which stories, proper and otherwise, are at the present day beginning to crystallize, will occur to every reader.

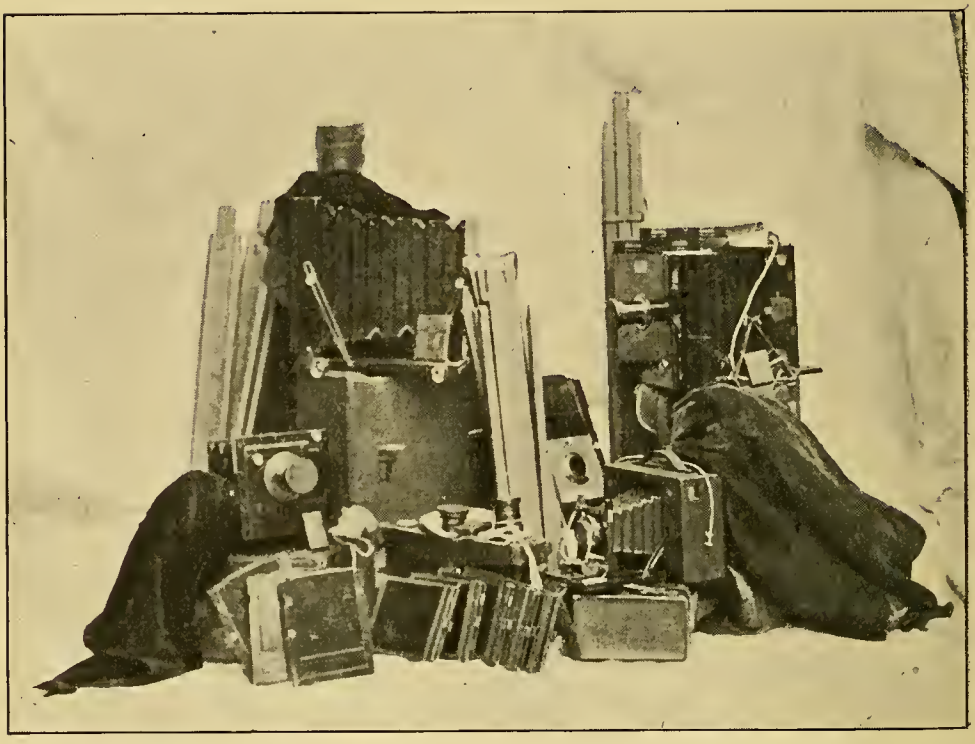
One curious story about her is so unusual that it does not bear the impress of pure invention.

A singular item in the marriage contract she made with Sir Richard Burke the Englishman, who, for some reason or other, had adopted the name of M'William Eighter, or Oughter as some historians say, was that the marriage was to last *for certain* but one year. If, at the end of that period, either of the contracting parties said to the other "I dismiss you," the union was, *ipso facto*, dissolved. It is said that during that year Grace took good care to put her own faithful followers into garrison in all M'William's eastward castles that were valuable to her. Then, one fine day, as the Lord of Mayo was coming up to the castle of Corrig-a-Howly, near Newport, Grace spied him and cried out, "I dismiss you!" History sayeth not how her spouse took the sudden snapping of the matrimonial contract. Perhaps the husband was not sorry. Who knows?

The romantic story of Grace O'Malley—and Ireland's past history abounds with many other equally interesting

persons—makes one regret that an Irish Sir Walter Scott has not arisen. Had there been such a delightful modern weaver of stories appertaining to the Emerald Isle, Ireland would have been as much, or even more sought after than Scotland. It is wonderful what a novelist can do for a country. As the world gets more and more prosaic, well-told and entrancing half-legendary and half-historical novels are more needed and more read. When will the great Irish novelist arise? Here is a large—very large—apartment "To Let."

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS USED IN TAKING THE PICTURES.



McKellen's Treble Patent Whole-Plate Camera; three double-backs.

Ross's Rapid Symmetrical Lens, 8 × 5.
Doppel, Anastigmat, Wide-Angle Lens.
E. Suter, Aplanat A, 12 × 10 Lens.

Half-Plate Camera (Perken, Son, and Rayment); two double-backs.

Rectilinear Lens.

5 × 4 Camera (Wratten and Wainwright); three double-backs.

Triple Achromatic Lens (Dallmeyer).

5 × 4 Kodak (old pattern); six double-backs.

Plates used: Imperial, of various rapidity, backed.

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